

# WOMEN AND WORK



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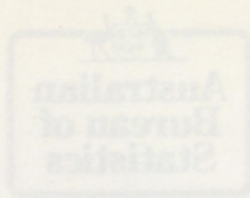
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Core material for Upper Secondary Studies









# WOMEN AND WORK

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## SYMBOLS AND GENERAL INFORMATION

### ***Symbols***

The following symbols, where shown in this publication, mean:

n.a.	not available
n.e.i.	not elsewhere included
n.p.	not published
*	subject to sampling variability too high for most practical purposes
..	not applicable
-	nil or rounded down to zero

In tables, totals may differ from the sum of the components due to rounding.

### ***General Information***

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) maintains an Information Consultancy Service, which provides advice on what products are available to best meet users' needs, as well as a library in which all publications of the ABS are available for reference.

Information regarding the ABS's servicing of the education sector in Victoria, including class presentations and products available, can be obtained from the Manager, Education Servicing, phone (03) 615 7351.

Information regarding the availability of other ABS publications can be obtained from the Information Services Section of any ABS Office. All publications issued by the ABS are contained in the '*Catalogue of Publications, Australia*,' (Cat. No. 1101.0), which is also available from any ABS Office. A list of ABS Offices appears on page 59 of this booklet.



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## PREFACE

'*Women and Work*' is another publication in an expanding range of products designed specifically for Australia's education sector by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

This statistical resource booklet provides valuable material for upper secondary school courses in Australian Studies, Economics, English and other subjects.

The publication presents comparative and historical data for students and teachers about women and the labour force, employment conditions, employment patterns and unpaid household work. It is released at a time when there is increasing demand for information about these and related issues.

A substantial contribution to the booklet was provided by Joanne Canterbury, a Melbourne secondary school teacher. The major ABS contributors to the book were John Moody, Adrian Serraglio and Christine Holland. The work of these people is gratefully acknowledged.

The ABS is continuing to develop special textbooks, kits and electronic materials for schools and other educational institutions. This is considered by the ABS to be an important initiative in support of the ABS mission 'to assist and encourage informed decision-making, research and discussion . . .' Providing Australia's future decision-makers with a broader and deeper knowledge of existing statistical information is seen as particularly important.

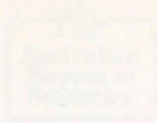
Within this spirit, I hope that '*Women and Work*' will be of use to students and teachers in many fields.

R.A. Crockett  
Deputy Commonwealth Statistician  
November 1992









## SECTION 1: WOMEN AND THE LABOUR FORCE

The role of women in Australia has changed significantly since the 1950s. In the 1950s, most women were seen as mothers and wives, and their primary role was in the home. However, by the 1970s, more women were entering the workforce, and their roles were becoming more diverse.



## SECTION 1







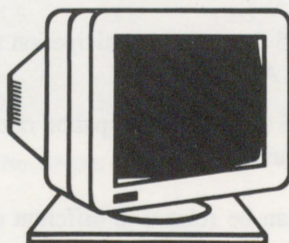
## **SECTION 1: WOMEN AND THE LABOUR FORCE**

The role of women in industrialised countries has undergone significant change in the 20th Century. In Australia, as elsewhere, a far larger number and proportion of women now seek work outside the home. Several factors have contributed to the emergence of working women as a strong feature of the Australian labour force.

During the Second World War many countries were forced to face a restructuring of their labour markets. Suddenly there was greatly increased demand for labour – Australia needed to expand armament and food production – together with a decline in the supply of labour as men left to fight the war. As a result, women were encouraged to join the labour force; married women were given as much encouragement as single women. Some social commentators contend that such experiences persuaded many women to continue to work or to return to the labour force in later life.

The size of families has declined in recent years; beginning in the 1960s, birth control and family planning allowed women to plan their families around their work or career aspirations. Traditional beliefs that women should stay working in the home, at the expense of a career, began to be challenged in the 1970s.

The increased involvement of women in Australia's labour force is therefore linked to both social and economic change. This increase can be studied in relation to different characteristics of the female population. Section 1 examines some of these characteristics (age, birthplace and marital status) and their links to female participation in the labour force. It also contains current and historical information on female unemployment rates and occupation patterns.





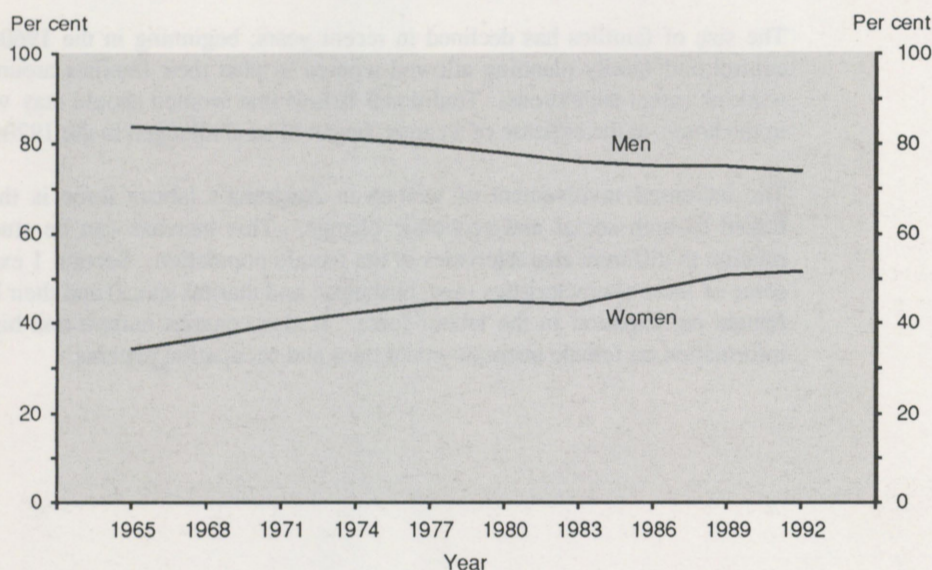
### Labour Force Participation Rates

The labour force is defined as: *the total supply of labour available to the labour market.* More broadly, the labour force is made up of people who are either employed or unemployed. (For a fuller definition refer to the Glossary).

The participation rate is defined as: *the proportion of the working age population who are in the labour force.* The working age population is defined as: *those Australians aged 15 and over.* The female participation rate is, therefore, the number of women aged 15 and over in the labour force, expressed as a percentage of all women aged 15 and over.

As mentioned in the introduction, women have expanded their involvement in the Australian labour force in recent times. Chart 1.1 shows this by displaying the rise of the female participation rate for the period 1965 to 1992.

**CHART 1.1: LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES (a),  
BY SEX, AUSTRALIA**



(a) Estimates are for August of each year.

Source: *The Labour Force, Australia*, ABS Cat. No. 6203.0

- ◆ At August 1965 the female participation rate was 34.1 per cent; this increased to 51.6 per cent at August 1992.
- ◆ At August 1965 the male participation rate was 83.8 per cent; this decreased to 73.8 per cent at August 1992.

Participation rates can be related to different characteristics such as age, birthplace or marital status. Thus, from Table 1.1, you can see that 74 per cent of all women in Australia in the 20 to 24 age group were in the labour force at the time of the 1986 census. The information in Table 1.1 allows you to pin-point those age groups which



have contributed the most, in percentage terms, to increases in female participation rates.

For the period 1911 to 1986, the female age group which showed the greatest percentage increase in labour force participation was the 35 to 44 age group. This group's participation rate has increased nearly fourfold in that period (16 per cent to 63 per cent).

**TABLE 1.1: FEMALE PARTICIPATION RATES, BY AGE,  
SELECTED CENSUSES (a), AUSTRALIA**  
(per cent)

Age group	1911	1933	1961	1971	1981	1986
15-19	43	47	64	52	55	51
20-24	40	50	51	59	71	74
25-34	23	25	26	39	54	59
35-44	16	16	28	44	59	63
45-54	15	16	27	40	51	54
55-59	14	15	22	28	33	32
60-64	13	10	13	16	15	14
65+	7	5	4	4	5	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>47</b>

(a) Estimates are for census night of each year.

Source: ABS Population Census Reports

Until the second half of the 20th Century women who left the labour force to have children were not expected to return to it. However, the factors listed on page 1, together with the provision of child care and maternity leave, have acted to encourage women with children to return in increasing numbers to the labour force. This continuing trend is borne out by Table 1.2 which shows more recent data than Table 1.1.

**TABLE 1.2: FEMALE PARTICIPATION RATES, BY AGE,  
1987-1992 (a), AUSTRALIA**  
(per cent)

Age group	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
15-19	53.7	56.0	57.1	56.8	52.6	54.2
20-24	75.5	75.7	77.4	78.8	76.7	75.6
25-34	61.9	62.1	65.0	65.1	65.6	64.9
35-44	65.8	68.2	69.8	72.1	71.9	71.6
45-54	55.3	57.1	59.3	61.0	62.7	64.6
55-59	30.5	31.4	32.1	33.8	35.7	36.8
60-64	13.2	14.5	13.6	16.3	14.6	12.5
65+	2.6	2.5	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>48.3</b>	<b>49.4</b>	<b>50.8</b>	<b>51.8</b>	<b>51.5</b>	<b>51.6</b>

(a) Estimates are for August of each year.

Source: *The Labour Force, Australia*, ABS Cat. No. 6203.0

**Did you know that:** in the 1911 census count there were 72 employed girls and 148 employed boys aged 5 to 9 years?



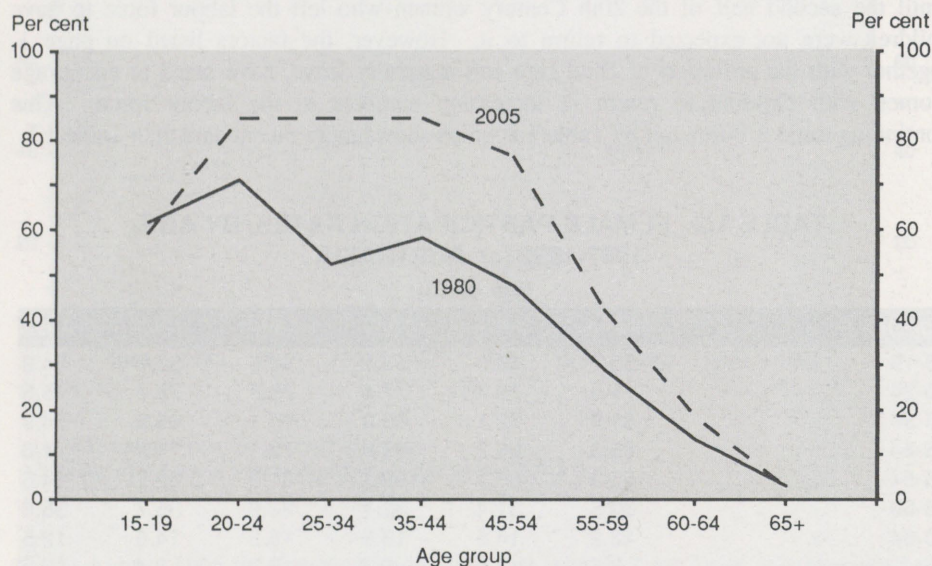
The ABS publication *'Labour Force Projections, Australia, 1992-2005'* (Cat. No. 6260.0) contains information about projected future participation rates. Based on certain assumptions, the findings project that fewer women will leave the labour force when they have children; instead they will continue to work at least part-time. Some of the major projections are that:

- ◆ the participation rate for women will increase from an annual average of 52.2 per cent in 1990 to 60.3 per cent in 2005;
- ◆ by 2005 only 15 per cent of women in the prime child-bearing age group (25 to 34) will be out of the labour force, compared to 34 per cent in 1991;
- ◆ almost two-thirds of the projected growth in the labour force between 1992 and 2005 will be made up of women.

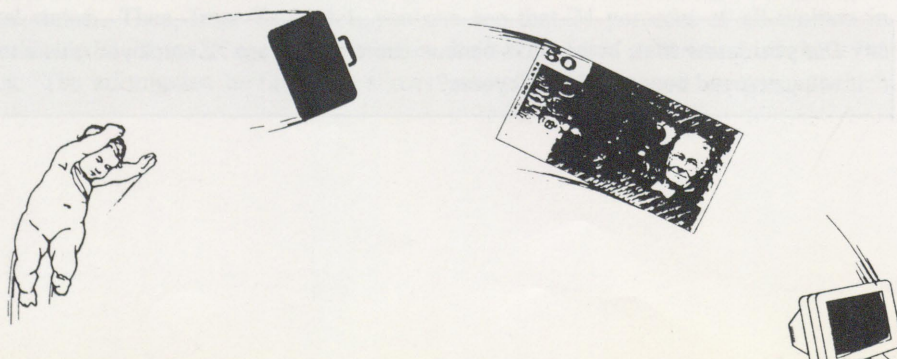
It appears then that a greater percentage of women than ever before will engage in work outside the home in the near future. This has implications for the Australian economy; it presents future governments with real challenges in developing and implementing effective job creation and maintenance policies.

Chart 1.2 shows a comparison between actual participation rates for women by age group in 1980 and projected rates for the year 2005.

**CHART 1.2: FEMALE PARTICIPATION RATES (a), BY AGE, AUSTRALIA**



(a) 1980 estimates are based on annual averages of the monthly Labour Force Survey.  
Source: *Labour Force Projections, Australia, 1992-2005*, ABS Cat. No. 6260.0





### Women not in the Labour Force

At September 1991 there were 3,643,900 Australians aged between 15 and 69 who were not in the labour force. Of these, 68 per cent were women.

While not in the labour force, many women have what the ABS terms '*marginal attachment*' to it (see Glossary for definition). There are several reasons why women who are marginally attached to the labour force do not actively look for work. They may have personal or family reasons or they may be discouraged jobseekers.

**TABLE 1.3: WOMEN WITH MARGINAL ATTACHMENT TO THE LABOUR FORCE: MAIN REASON FOR NOT ACTIVELY LOOKING FOR WORK, AUSTRALIA**  
(<sup>'000</sup>)

	Sept. 1988	Sept. 1989	Sept. 1990	Sept. 1991
Had a job to go to	13.4	12.1	12.7	18.8
<b>Personal reasons:</b>	<b>145.8</b>	<b>159.9</b>	<b>160.2</b>	<b>165.2</b>
Own ill health/physical disability or pregnancy	35.0	44.3	43.3	35.6
Attending an educational institution	55.7	63.8	62.0	75.3
Had no need to work	28.3	25.9	31.9	30.2
Give others a chance	3.6	2.8	4.3	7.0
Welfare payments/pension may be affected	10.5	11.8	10.0	8.0
Moved house/holidays	12.6	11.2	8.7	9.1
<b>Family reasons:</b>	<b>239.2</b>	<b>222.5</b>	<b>234.5</b>	<b>247.2</b>
Ill health of other than self	10.6	10.8	10.0	12.2
Child care	190.8	175.6	176.3	193.7
Other family considerations	37.8	36.1	48.1	41.3
<b>Discouraged jobseekers:</b>	<b>64.1</b>	<b>57.9</b>	<b>76.6</b>	<b>103.7</b>
Considered too young or too old by employers	23.5	22.8	26.0	16.8
Difficulties with language or ethnic background	5.3	3.0	7.4	5.8
Lacked necessary schooling/training/ skills/experience	12.0	9.0	11.3	11.6
No jobs in locality or line of work	17.5	19.3	24.5	38.1
No jobs at all	5.7	3.8	7.4	31.4
No jobs in suitable hours	8.6	9.5	10.4	10.8
Other reasons	24.1	23.9	25.3	24.5
Did not know	4.7	6.2	6.0	5.6
<b>Total (a)</b>	<b>530.9</b>	<b>521.5</b>	<b>557.1</b>	<b>598.8</b>

(a) Includes women who wanted to work and were actively looking for work.

Source: *Persons not in the Labour Force, Australia, September 1991*, ABS Cat. No. 6220.0

The total number of women marginally attached to the labour force at September 1991 was 598,800. Of this total, 41 per cent said that family reasons prevented them from actively seeking work. The main family reason cited by women was child care, with some stating that they preferred to care for their children themselves and others mentioning the lack of child care facilities.



### Unemployment Rates

When the ABS talks about the unemployed it refers to: *those persons aged 15 and over who were not employed during the week of the ABS's Labour Force Survey* (see Glossary for a full definition). The unemployment rate for any group is defined as: *the number of unemployed persons expressed as a percentage of the labour force in the same group*.

As with participation rates, unemployment rates can be related to various characteristics such as age and sex. Table 1.4 shows that young women (15 to 19 years) have consistently had the highest unemployment rates of any female age group since 1967.

**TABLE 1.4: UNEMPLOYMENT RATES (a), BY AGE AND SEX, AUSTRALIA**  
(per cent)

Age group	1967	1972	1977	1982	1987	1992
<b>Women</b>						
15-19	3.6	5.9	20.3	17.0	19.4	24.8
20-24	3.0	3.8	8.0	8.8	10.5	13.7
25-34	3.4	4.1	5.3	6.9	7.5	8.6
35-44	2.7	3.1	4.5	4.8	6.1	6.5
45-54	2.3	2.1	3.2	3.6	4.5	5.8
55+	1.1	2.0	1.7	2.7	2.2	2.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>7.4</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>9.5</b>
<b>Men</b>						
15-19	3.1	5.6	15.8	16.3	18.0	25.1
20-24	1.7	2.6	7.2	11.2	12.6	18.3
25-34	0.8	1.5	3.2	5.5	7.0	10.8
35-44	0.9	1.3	2.9	3.6	4.8	7.5
45-54	1.0	1.4	2.5	3.6	4.2	7.2
55+	0.9	1.5	2.5	3.3	5.5	10.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>11.3</b>

(a) Estimates are for August of each year.

Source: *The Labour Force, Australia*, ABS Cat. No. 6203.0

Since the end of the 1960s, the Australian economy has been increasingly unable to create jobs for all those wishing to work. Thus, unemployment rates for both women and men have steadily increased since then; in most age groups unemployment rates for women were higher than those for men until the early 1990s. Several factors are worth considering as explanations for the comparatively higher unemployment rates for women in the 1970s and 1980s.

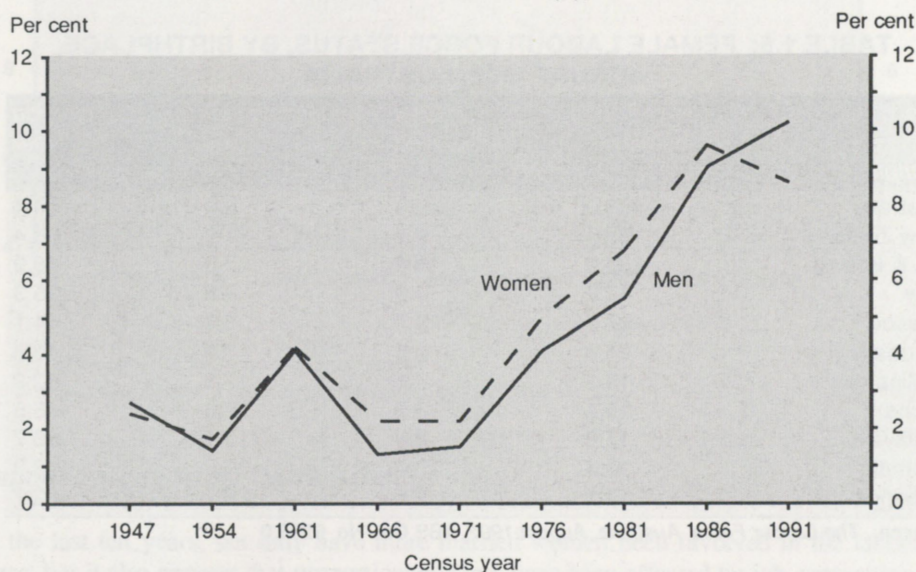
Skill levels, extent of education, and the tendency for part-time and low paid workers to have been laid off first in times of economic hardship are among them. It may also be that family decisions continued to be based on the man's career rather than the woman's; some women may not have been free to move to areas where their work prospects may have been brighter. Further, a man's career move may sometimes have involved interstate migration thus causing the woman to be initially unemployed in the new area.



In the early 1990s, however, relative job prospects for women and men have reversed. Male unemployment rates are now higher than those of women. The major reason for this is that virtually all recent increases in unemployment have been among former full-time workers. Two thirds of Australia's full-time workers are men.

Chart 1.3 shows that female unemployment rates have tended to be higher than those for men since the end of the Second World War.

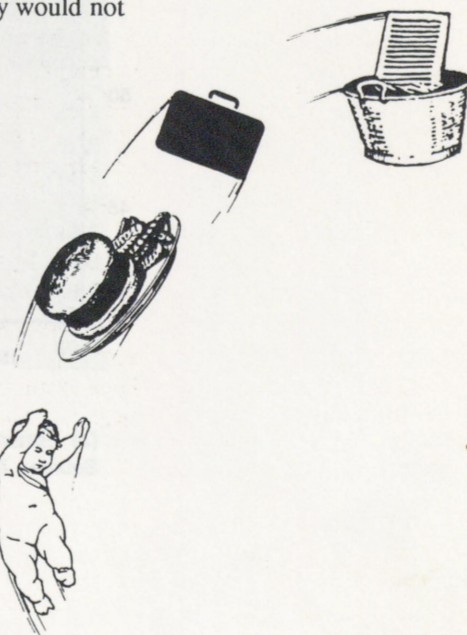
**CHART 1.3: UNEMPLOYMENT RATES (a), BY SEX, AUSTRALIA**



(a) Estimates are for census night of each year, except 1991 which is from the Labour Force Survey for August.

Sources: *ABS Population Census Reports* and *The Labour Force, Australia, August 1991*, ABS Cat. No. 6203.0

It should be noted that in addition to those women classified as unemployed by the ABS there are also women who are termed discouraged jobseekers. Although wanting to work, these women did not actively look for work because they believed they would not find a job for the various reasons listed in Table 1.3 on page 5.





### Labour Force Status - Birthplace

Labour force status refers to: *classification of the civilian population aged 15 and over into employed, unemployed or not in the labour force, as defined.* There is a recorded relationship between place of birth, cultural influences and labour force status.

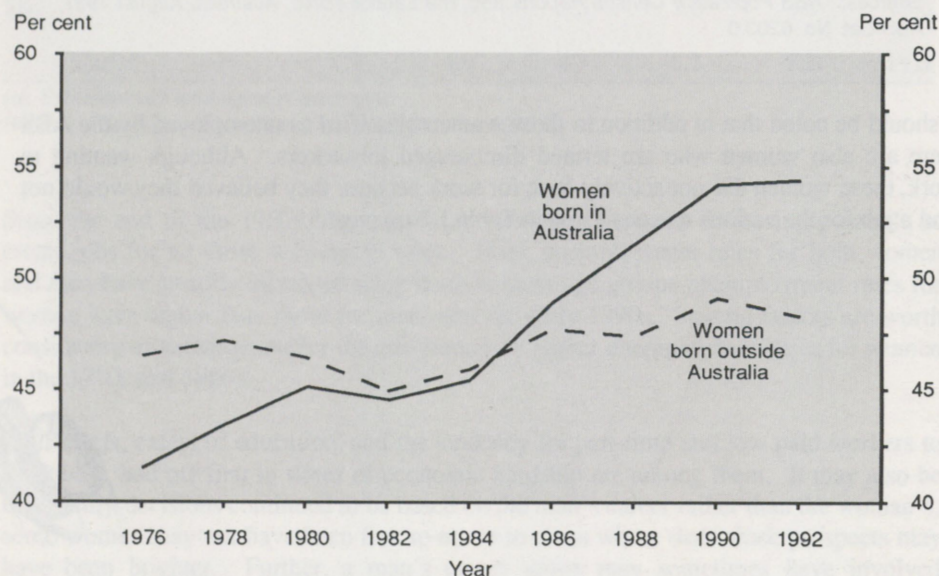
Table 1.5 shows recent information on female labour force status by selected countries of birth. It is clear that women from particular ethnic and cultural backgrounds have noticeably different unemployment and participation rates than those of others.

**TABLE 1.5: FEMALE LABOUR FORCE STATUS, BY BIRTHPLACE, AUGUST 1992, AUSTRALIA**

Birthplace	Total employed	Total unemployed — '000 —	Unemployment rate	Participation rate — per cent —
Australia	2 488.0	242.9	8.9	54.4
New Zealand	67.3	9.1	11.9	65.4
UK & Ireland	250.9	19.8	7.3	49.9
Italy	41.2	4.0	8.8	35.3
Greece	27.7	2.7	8.7	44.1
Germany	21.6	2.5	10.2	43.8
Philippines	19.1	4.1	17.6	52.2
China	16.1	3.2	16.6	46.5
Malaysia	17.0	2.6	13.1	56.7
Vietnam	15.3	10.0	39.5	42.3
Lebanon	7.1	2.8	28.1	32.7

Source: *The Labour Force, Australia, August 1992*, ABS Cat. No. 6203.0

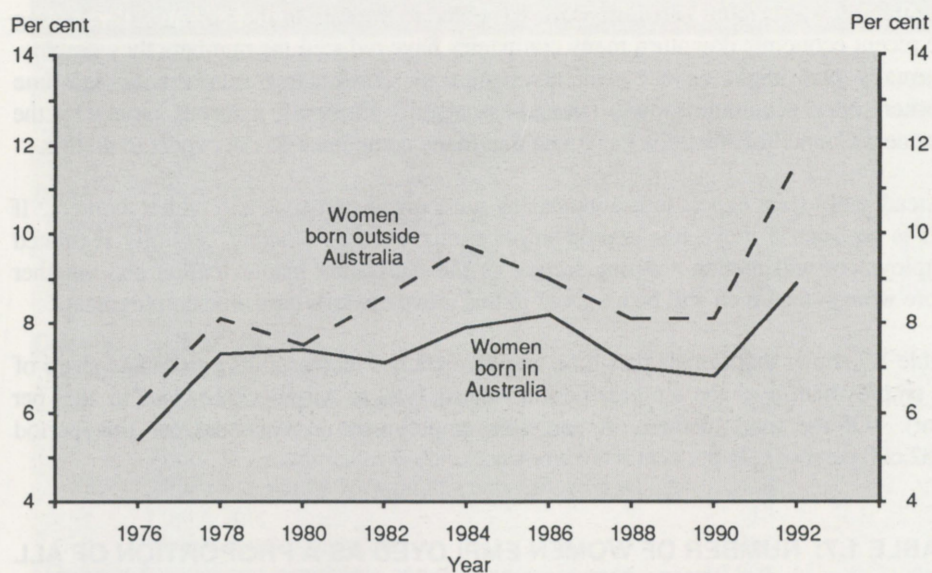
**CHART 1.4: FEMALE PARTICIPATION RATES (a), BY BIRTHPLACE, AUSTRALIA**



(a) Estimates are for August of each year.

Source: *The Labour Force, Australia*, ABS Cat. No. 6203.0



**CHART 1.5: FEMALE UNEMPLOYMENT RATES (a), BY BIRTHPLACE, AUSTRALIA**

(a) Estimates are for August of each year.

Source: *The Labour Force, Australia*, ABS Cat. No. 6203.0

### **Labour Force Status - Marital Status**

In the last ten years, not only have more married women been involved in the labour force, but it also appears that proportionately less have been affected by job contraction. Table 1.6 shows that in recent years married women have had unemployment rates well under those of unmarried women.

**TABLE 1.6: FEMALE LABOUR FORCE STATUS, BY MARITAL STATUS, AUSTRALIA**  
(per cent)

August	Married women		Unmarried women	
	Unemployment rate	Participation rate	Unemployment rate	Participation rate
1983	7.1	41.8	14.0	47.9
1984	5.6	42.8	12.1	47.4
1985	5.7	44.3	11.1	47.8
1986	5.3	47.1	12.8	48.3
1987	5.7	48.6	12.2	47.9
1988	4.8	49.6	11.0	49.1
1989	4.0	51.1	9.5	50.3
1990	4.6	52.8	10.9	50.6
1991	5.8	52.6	12.8	50.1
1992	5.9	53.0	14.9	49.6

Source: *The Labour Force, Australia*, ABS Cat. No. 6203.0



### Employment Status - Full-Time and Part-Time

The trend towards more part-time work has come to the fore in the early 1990s. During the recent economic downturn many companies have reduced the numbers they employ. Normally one might expect such companies to recruit large numbers of full-time workers once economic growth strengthens again. However, a recent survey by the Business Council of Australia has found that many companies do not expect to do this.

Instead, employers expect to use increasing numbers of part-time and casual workers. If this is so, such a move has several implications, such as whether centrally regulated employment will remain a strong feature of the Australian labour market and whether more women than men will be involved in this move towards part-time employment.

Table 1.7 shows that female part-time employment has increased its percentage share of all employment over the ten year period August 1983 to August 1992 (13.6 to 18.3 per cent). Of the total increase in part-time employment in Australia for this period (782,600 persons), 71 per cent were women.

**TABLE 1.7: NUMBER OF WOMEN EMPLOYED AS A PROPORTION OF ALL EMPLOYED PERSONS, AUSTRALIA**  
(per cent)

August	Married women		All women	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
1983	12.1	10.1	23.8	13.6
1984	12.2	10.2	23.9	13.9
1985	12.1	10.5	24.1	14.3
1986	12.8	11.2	24.4	14.9
1987	12.8	11.4	24.1	15.6
1988	13.0	11.7	24.5	16.0
1989	13.2	11.7	24.5	16.4
1990	13.5	11.8	24.8	16.6
1991	13.9	12.0	24.9	17.2
1992	13.6	12.7	24.0	18.3

Source: *The Labour Force, Australia*, ABS Cat. No. 6203.0

### Female Occupation Patterns

The further you look back into Australian history, the more obstacles you find that stood in the way of women being able to choose their own occupation compared to men. One hundred years ago the first female doctors graduated from Melbourne University. There was something of an outcry over this, including a public description of the fact as 'unnatural'!

The first figures for Australian female occupation patterns were made available from the 1901 census. A careful examination of Table 1.8 gives an illuminating picture of working life for women in 1901. For that period, traditional female occupations included domestic service, working in the textile industry and work in religion, charity, health or education. By looking at the third column in the table you can see those occupations in which women predominated.

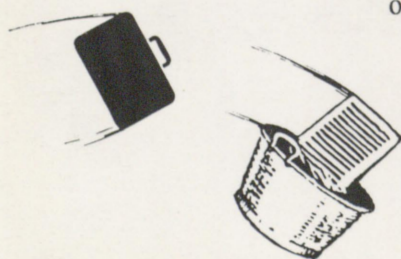




TABLE 1.8: FEMALE POPULATION, BY OCCUPATION, 1901 CENSUS (a), AUSTRALIA

<i>Occupation description</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Persons</i>	<i>Female percentage</i>
<b>Class I – PROFESSIONAL –</b>			
Engaged in Government, defence, law, etc.	401	26 987	1.5
" in Religion, charity, health, education, etc.	40 834	84 147	48.5
Total Class I	41 235	111 134	37.1
<b>Class II – DOMESTIC –</b>			
Engaged in supplying board & lodging	40 270	63 241	63.7
" in domestic service & attendance	110 431	137 795	80.1
Total Class II	150 701	201 036	75.0
<b>Class III – COMMERCIAL –</b>			
Dealing in property & finance	6 182	32 967	18.8
" Art & mechanic productions	2 067	13 317	15.5
" Textile, fabrics, dress & fibrous materials	6 954	25 906	26.8
" Food, drinks, narcotics & stimulants	7 611	60 348	12.6
" Animals & animal & vegetable substances n.e.i.	446	13 973	3.2
" Fuel & light	73	7 184	1.0
" Metals & other minerals	260	6 523	4.0
General & undefined merchants and dealers	10 891	60 119	18.1
Speculators on chance events	29	865	3.4
Engaged in storage	1	1 456	-
Total Class III	34 514	222 658	15.5
<b>Class IV – TRANSPORT &amp; COMMUNICATION –</b>			
Engaged in railway traffic	741	33 441	2.2
" Traffic on roads	173	36 687	0.5
" Traffic on seas & rivers	254	36 475	0.7
" Postal, telegraph & telephone service	2 248	13 437	16.7
Messengers, etc.	13	2 119	0.6
Total Class IV	3 429	122 159	2.8
<b>Class V – INDUSTRIAL –</b>			
Working in art & mechanic productions	3 713	71 992	5.2
" Textile, fabrics, dress & fibrous materials	67 066	95 176	70.5
" Food, drinks, narcotics & stimulants	2 919	35 649	8.2
" Animal & vegetable substances n.e.i.	149	15 696	0.9
" Metals & other minerals	168	45 224	0.4
" Fuel, light and other forms of energy	42	3 971	1.1
Engaged in construction of buildings, roads, railways etc.	31	92 601	-
" Disposal of the dead or of refuse	43	3 348	1.3
" Undefined industrial pursuits	1 439	62 509	2.3
Total Class V	75 570	426 166	17.7
<b>Class VI – PRIMARY PRODUCERS –</b>			
Engaged in agricultural pursuits	24 702	276 074	8.9
" Pastoral pursuits	14 118	111 802	12.6
" Capture etc. of wild animals & their produce	63	3 988	1.6
" Fisheries	17	6 595	0.3
" Forestry	9	11 121	0.1
" Water conservation & supply	6	5 238	0.1
" Mining & quarrying	29	118 289	-
Total Class VI	38 944	533 107	7.3



TABLE 1.8: FEMALE POPULATION, BY OCCUPATION, 1901 CENSUS (a), AUSTRALIA (cont.)

<i>Occupation description</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Persons</i>	<i>Female percentage</i>
Class VII – INDEFINITE – (of independent means)	10 129	22 396	45.2
Class VIII – DEPENDANTS –			
Dependent on natural guardians	1 419 789	2 078 067	68.3
Supported by voluntary & State contributions	15 490	37 221	41.6
Criminal class (under legal detention)	1 240	6 233	19.9
Total Class VIII	1 436 519	2 121 521	67.7
UNSPECIFIED	4 832	13 624	35.5
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1 795 873</b>	<b>3 773 801 (b)</b>	<b>47.6</b>

(a) Estimates are for 31 March, 1901. (b) Excludes 1,533 half-castes in Queensland, and 533 in South Australia.

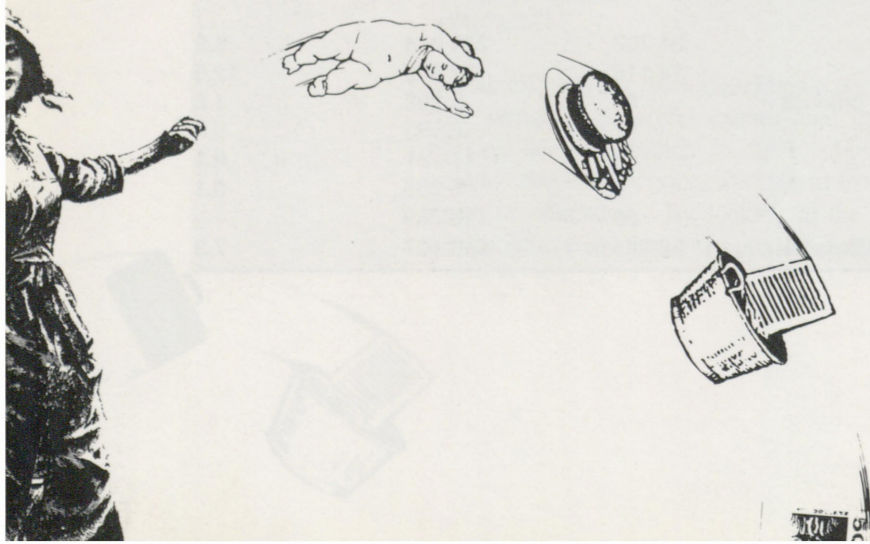
Source: *Year Book, Australia, 1901 to 1907*, ABS Cat. No. 1301.0

Ignoring the classification 'Dependants', at census night 1901:

- ♦ the greatest number of women employed in one occupation description was the 110,431 engaged in domestic service and attendance;
- ♦ the greatest percentage of women in one occupation description was the 80.1 per cent of all those engaged in domestic service and attendance; this was followed by the percentage of women working in industrial production of textiles, fabrics, dresses and fibrous materials (70.5 per cent);
- ♦ the lowest percentage of women in any of the major occupation classifications (Class I, II, etc.) was in the Transport and Communication Industry (2.8 per cent).

There were clearly different cultural and social values present in Australian society in 1901 compared to today. This is reflected, in part, by the classification of occupations in the 1901 census. If you compare the occupation classifications in Tables 1.8 and 1.9 you will notice a degree of difference.

✦ **Did you know that:** of the 29 women engaged in speculating on chance events as an occupation at the 1901 Census, thirteen were living in Queensland, whilst there was only one living in Victoria and none living in New South Wales?





**TABLE 1.9: EMPLOYED WOMEN, BY OCCUPATION, AUSTRALIA, AUGUST 1992**  
('000)

<i>Occupation major and minor group</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Persons</i>	<i>Female percentage</i>
<b>MANAGERS &amp; ADMINISTRATORS</b>	218.3	869.5	25.1
Legislators & government appointed officials	0.7	2.2	31.8
General managers	3.3	33.4	9.9
Specialist managers	37.6	193.8	19.4
Farmers & farm managers	69.0	239.8	28.8
Managing supervisors	107.6	400.3	26.9
<b>PROFESSIONALS</b>	451.2	1 063.6	42.4
Natural scientists	10.9	39.5	27.6
Building professionals & engineers	3.6	120.2	3.0
Health diagnosis & treatment practitioners	39.8	93.9	42.4
School teachers	182.0	265.9	68.4
Other teachers & instructors	64.7	120.0	53.9
Social professionals	25.8	64.8	39.8
Business professionals	70.2	241.2	29.1
Artists & related professionals	29.6	69.8	42.4
Miscellaneous professionals	24.8	48.3	51.3
<b>PARA-PROFESSIONALS</b>	217.3	465.6	46.7
Medical & science technical officers & technicians	16.4	34.8	47.1
Engineering & building associates & technicians	5.2	78.7	6.6
Air & sea transport technical workers	0.4	18.6	2.2
Registered nurses	145.4	157.4	92.4
Police	4.9	44.4	11.0
Miscellaneous para-professionals	44.9	131.6	34.1
<b>TRADESPERSONS</b>	118.8	1 149.6	10.3
Metal fitting & machining tradespersons	0.4	111.2	0.4
Other metal tradespersons	1.3	94.3	1.4
Electrical & electronic tradespersons	2.1	171.8	1.2
Building tradespersons	3.4	249.4	1.4
Printing tradespersons	7.8	43.7	17.8
Vehicle tradespersons	0.3	150.6	0.2
Food tradespersons	32.9	112.0	29.4
Amenity horticultural tradespersons	5.2	48.9	10.6
Miscellaneous tradespersons	65.5	167.8	39.0
<b>CLERKS</b>	991.9	1 279.7	77.5
Stenographers & typists	260.4	264.0	98.6
Data processing & business machine operators	78.0	103.2	75.6
Numerical clerks	343.7	465.2	73.9
Filing, sorting & copying clerks	31.9	50.5	63.2
Material recording & despatching clerks	24.3	69.3	35.1
Receptionists, telephonists & messengers	149.1	171.8	86.8
Miscellaneous clerks	104.5	155.6	67.2
<b>SALESPERSONS &amp; PERSONAL SERVICE WORKERS</b>	768.6	1 173.3	65.5
Investment, insurance & real estate salespersons	20.4	87.9	23.2
Sales representatives	30.4	112.0	27.1
Sales assistants	335.1	484.1	69.2
Tellers, cashiers & ticket salespersons	118.2	145.2	81.4
Miscellaneous salespersons	115.5	179.5	64.3



**TABLE 1.9: EMPLOYED WOMEN, BY OCCUPATION, AUSTRALIA, AUGUST 1992 (cont.)**  
('000)

<i>Occupation major and minor group</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Persons</i>	<i>Female percentage</i>
Personal service workers	149.0	164.5	90.6
<b>PLANT &amp; MACHINE OPERATORS &amp; DRIVERS</b>	<b>77.2</b>	<b>547.2</b>	<b>14.1</b>
Road & rail transport drivers	14.9	254.8	5.8
Mobile plant operators (except transport)	0.7	99.9	0.7
Stationary plant operators	0.6	58.4	1.0
Machine operators	61.0	134.0	45.5
<b>LABOURERS &amp; RELATED WORKERS</b>	<b>402.6</b>	<b>1 130.9</b>	<b>35.6</b>
Trades assistants & factory hands	91.1	264.5	34.4
Agricultural labourers & related workers	34.4	129.0	26.7
Cleaners	131.1	201.1	65.2
Construction & mining labourers	2.0	103.4	1.9
Miscellaneous labourers & related workers	144.0	432.8	33.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 245.8</b>	<b>7 679.3</b>	<b>42.3</b>

Source: *The Labour Force, Australia, August 1992*, ABS Cat. No. 6203.0

☛ **Did you know that:** in 1991 Australia's 100 largest publicly listed companies had only three women in their lists of directors?

The debate about whether women are more suited to particular occupations than men is certainly not new. One welcome change is that more women now have a greater diversity of career opportunity. This has led to some interesting statistical change. For example, a recent survey commissioned by the City of Melbourne found that in 1990 in Victoria nearly one third of the State's small businesses were run by women, a 43 per cent increase since 1984.

The Australian workplace environment in the early 1990s is beginning to go through a process of change. There are moves in many organisations towards more team-work and training, together with a greater devolution of power and decision-making responsibilities. Some social commentators believe these processes will advantage women as they tend to have a more interactive and participatory outlook than men. However, stereotyping by gender is a concern to others.

*"I'm really torn. I agree that the workplace needs to be transformed and humanised, but it makes me nervous when men are seen as being one way and women as all sugar and spice."*

Susan Faludi, Author of *'Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women'* (1992)



From Table 1.9 you can see that, at August 1992:

- ◆ the major occupation groups in which women predominated were clerks (77.5 per cent), followed by salespersons and personal service workers (65.5 per cent);
- ◆ the minor occupation groups in which women predominated were stenographers and typists (98.6 per cent), followed by registered nurses (92.4 per cent) and personal service workers (90.6 per cent);
- ◆ the lowest percentage of women in a major occupation group was tradespersons (10.3 per cent), and the lowest in a minor occupation group was vehicle tradespersons (0.2 per cent).

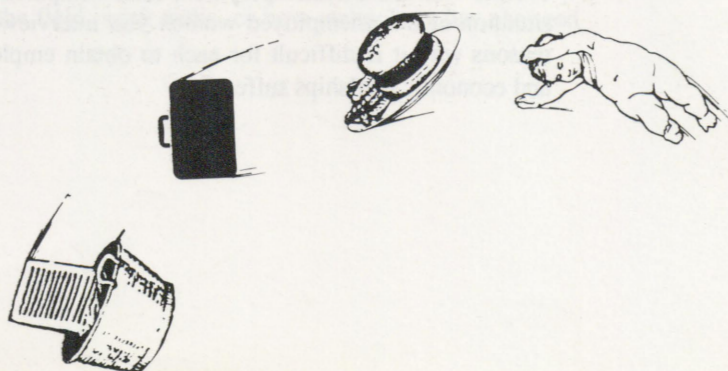
In August 1986 the ABS developed the Australian Standard Classification of Occupations for use in its labour force surveys. A precisely accurate historical comparison of figures in Table 1.9 can only be made back to that date. Table 1.10 shows a comparison over a six year period.

**TABLE 1.10: PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN IN MAJOR OCCUPATION GROUPS, AUSTRALIA**

	August 1986	August 1992
Managers & administrators	22.5	25.1
Professionals	39.0	42.4
Para-professionals	43.1	46.7
Tradespersons	10.0	10.3
Clerks	74.0	77.5
Salespersons & personal service workers	62.9	65.5
Plant & machine operators & drivers	16.7	14.1
Labourers & related workers	33.4	35.6

Source: *The Labour Force, Australia*, ABS Cat. No. 6203.0

The Australian labour market has gone through a process of change in the last few years in respect of the proportion of women engaged in different occupations. The most significant change depicted in Table 1.10 is the increase in the percentages of women in professional and para-professional occupations. As women gain further skills and confidence these percentages can be expected to continue to increase in the 1990s.





## SUGGESTED CLASS ACTIVITIES

### Australian Studies - Introductory Activities



1. When you first examine a table of data you should look for such things as any substantial increases or decreases in the figures or any interesting comparisons that can be made. Listed below are two general observations about the information in Table 1.1. Write two other general observations yourself.
  - ◆ Participation rates for women aged 20 to 24 are higher than the participation rates for women aged 25 to 34 in all selected census years.
  - ◆ In 1986 participation rates for women aged 15 to 59 increased significantly compared to participation rates in 1911.

Having made general observations about the data, search for possible explanations of them. Investigate further.

2. Bill's grandmother was part of the 50 per cent of women in the 20 to 24 age group participating in the labour force in 1933. She was a teacher who was required by the Education Department to stop work in 1934 because she was to marry!

For one of the age groups listed in Table 1.1, find a female member of your family, or that of a friend's, who participated in the labour force prior to the start of the Second World War (1939). Copy the table below into your books and fill in the details. Discuss your findings in class.

Year	Age group	Name	Occupation

3. What age will you be in the year 2005? Make a prediction as to whether you will be participating in the labour force. If you are female check your prediction with the projected labour force participation rates for your age group in Chart 1.2. If you are male the projected labour force participation rate for the 25 to 34 age group in the year 2005 is 92.1 per cent.

Write a short essay on the work you think you might be doing in the year 2005. Include information on whether you will be in the labour force, employed or unemployed, working full-time or part-time and which occupation group you will most likely be in (refer to Table 1.9).

4. Imagine you are a journalist who has been asked to write a brief article on female unemployment. Use the information in Table 1.4 to give your readers a brief overview of female unemployment rates compared to those of men. Mention the situation of the unemployed women you interviewed to do the story, referring to reasons why it is difficult for each to obtain employment as well as the personal and economic hardships suffered.



5. Place the countries of birth listed in Table 1.5 in order from the highest to lowest unemployment rates. Talk to a woman born in any of these countries (other than Australia) who is or has been in the labour force. Ask her whether she has experienced difficulties gaining employment or remaining employed, and whether these difficulties were associated with having a different cultural background. Discuss your findings in class and make a list of possible reasons why women born in some countries could have higher unemployment rates than others.
6. Table 1.8 shows the variety of occupations women were involved in around the turn of the century. Use an encyclopaedia to discover the occupations of the following famous Australian women.

Florence Taylor, Nellie Melba, Mary McKillop, Vida Goldstein, Florence Young, Catherine Spence and Henry Handel Richardson.

Refer to Table 1.9 and state which occupation class (major and minor) these women should now be placed in for the purpose of compiling the 1991 census.

### ***Australian Studies - Major Projects***

1. Write a report on how the participation rate for women has changed over time (refer to Tables 1.1 and 1.2). Mention how some of the following factors might have affected female participation rates:

sexual discrimination laws, attitudes towards women in the labour force, family size, birth control, birth rates, infant mortality rates, significant historical events such as war or economic depression, educational attainment, or the increasing proportion of part-time workers in the economy.

2. Choose an occupation in which you are interested from the list below (or choose a different one). Investigate and report on the history of women working in this occupation to the present day.

Architect, Chemist, Doctor, Engineer, Lawyer, Nurse, Teacher, or Politician.

Use Table 1.8 to determine which class the occupation you have chosen belonged to in 1901, and whether it was common for women to be involved in this area. Refer to Table 1.9 for up-to-date information. Arrange an interview with a woman working in the occupation you have chosen. Questions asked could be based on: educational qualifications, factors determining career choice, general attitudes towards women working in the field, work tasks, or how technology has changed the type of work undertaken.



3. Imagine you are a female migrant from any of the countries listed in Table 1.5. Write an essay outlining your experiences and the barriers you might have faced in gaining employment. You could include: unemployment and participation rates for women from your country of birth, language difficulties faced, acceptance of qualifications, racial discrimination, differing methods of applying for positions in the country you were born in and Australia, or the demand for workers in your particular occupation.

In order to gain an understanding of the problems some female migrants face you could talk to women who have migrated to Australia, read newspaper articles and books which relate the experiences of migrant women, and, of course, look at the statistics!

4. Undertake an investigation into the main reasons why women are discouraged from looking for paid work. Analyse the data in Table 1.3 concerning discouraged job-seekers. Note the most common reason given for being discouraged from looking for work and the changes that have taken place in the numbers of discouraged job-seekers since 1988. Try to ascertain whether the reasons why discouraged jobseekers believed they would not find a job are valid.

### ***Economics - Applied Economic Exercises***

1. Look at Table 1.1 and familiarise yourself with the figures. For the following statements choose the correct response.

- ♦ Participation rates for women aged 20 to 54 have increased/decreased over time.
- ♦ A higher/lower percentage of women aged 65 years and over were participating in the labour force in 1911, compared with other age groups listed in Table 1.1.

Make two more observations about the data yourself.

2. Use the information in Table 1.2 to draw a bar graph depicting participation rates for women in the 45 to 54 age group from August 1987 to August 1992. Write a brief paragraph on the changes in participation rates for this age group.
3. Refer to Chart 1.3. State the years in which the female unemployment rate was below the male unemployment rate. Suggest reasons why this occurred.

Based on the August 1992 female and male unemployment rates in Table 1.4, who out of the following pairs has the higher unemployment rate for their age group?

Sue aged 15	Michelle aged 20	Kate aged 30	Anne aged 55
John aged 15	Peter aged 30	Alan aged 40	Jason aged 55





Do you think the differences between female and male unemployment rates have changed much since 1967? Support your answer with evidence from Table 1.4.

4. Calculate the female and male unemployment rate yourself! The unemployment rate is derived by the following equation:

$$\frac{\text{Number of unemployed}}{\text{Number in the labour force}} \times 100$$

Draw the table below into your book and complete it by using the above equation to calculate the unemployment rate. Check your answer with the percentage estimates in Table 1.4.

August	Unemployed (000's)	Labour force (000's)	Unemployment rate (Per cent)
<i>Women</i>			
1982	189.7	2 544.7	
1992	342.0	3 587.8	
<i>Men</i>			
1982	271.7	4 296.0	
1992	564.4	4 997.8	

5. Refer to Chart 1.5. In which year was the unemployment rate for women born in Australia closest to the rate for women born outside Australia? What was the greatest percentage difference between the unemployment rates experienced by women born in and outside Australia (approximately) and in which year did it occur?

Refer to Table 1.5. Suggest reasons why participation rates may differ between women according to their place of birth.

6. Imagine you are a woman who is migrating to Australia. State your place of birth (choose from the countries listed in Table 1.5), occupation, educational qualifications, age, grasp of the English language, and family connections within Australia. Your choices could be based on someone you know such as a member of your family or that of a friend. Make a list of tasks you would have to undertake in order to secure employment.

Within the classroom discuss the difficulties each person might face in finding employment and assess their likelihood of success. You may also like to look at the statistics in Table 1.5. After your discussion, draw up a list of factors which might explain why women born in some countries have higher unemployment rates than others.



7. From Table 1.7 produce your own table of data on the number of **unmarried** women as a proportion of all persons employed in Australia. Produce a table for both full-time and part-time workers.

For the following statements choose the correct response.

- ◆ At August 1992 there were more/fewer married women who were working full-time than unmarried women working full-time.
- ◆ At August 1992 there were more/fewer married women working part-time than unmarried women working part-time.
- ◆ The number of employed women as a proportion of all those employed has gradually increased/decreased since August 1983.

8. Read this brief account of Margaret's work history and then fill in the missing answers by referring to the tables and charts in this section.

In 1987 Margaret, a 17 year old born in Australia, was employed as a clerical worker. After one year of working she decided to resign in order to resume her studies. Her parents supported her through teachers college. At the end of 1991 she married and graduated as a qualified primary school teacher, but was unemployed for nearly a year before finding a position.

Margaret was probably part of the:

\_\_\_\_\_ per cent of 15 to 19 year old women participating in the labour force at August 1987;

\_\_\_\_\_ women attending an educational institution at September 1988 who were marginally attached to the labour force;

\_\_\_\_\_ women born in Australia who were unemployed at August 1992.

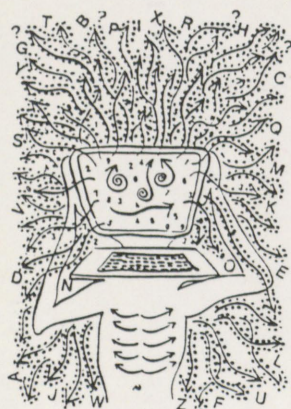
Draw a brief time-line depicting the work history of a member of the family or a friend over the last 5 years. As with the examples above, go through the tables and charts in this section and write down some statements involving the statistics.

### English - Communication Projects

1. Topic: Work – different in my grandmother's day!  
Intention: to inform others regarding changes in work for women.  
Audience: another class of VCE students.

Provide a brief snapshot of women and work by interviewing one woman who was employed in the first half of this century and one employed in more recent times. Devise a list of questions to help you gauge the changes that have taken place. The following items may help you get started: occupation, work performed, pay rates, educational qualifications, career guidance, family responsibilities, dress code, or promotional structure.

With the permission of the interviewee you could tape the interview. When presenting your project use the information in Table 1.1 as a starting point, as well





as playing the more interesting aspects of your recorded interview to the class. If possible, include any photographs or slides of women in the workplace.

2. Topic: Concentration of women in various occupations.

Intention: to inform.

Audience: the Student Representative Council.

Use Table 1.8 as a starting point to your presentation showing how women in 1901 were confined to a narrow range of occupations. Table 1.9 can also be used to illustrate the occupations in which women are concentrated today. Seek to find the many reasons why female occupation patterns are as they are.

You might like to find out what your fellow students think about women's and men's suitability for particular jobs. Conduct a survey of VCE students asking them whether each occupation listed below is suitable for women only, suitable for men only, or equally suitable for both women and men.

Bus Driver, Engineer, Mechanic, Nurse, Police Officer, Politician, Secretary.
---

Ask your level co-ordinator for the number of females and males taking various subjects within the VCE. Try to ascertain whether female students in your school are confining themselves to a narrow range of careers because of their subject choices.

3. Topic: Discouraged jobseekers.

Intention: to inform others.

Audience: your class.

Start your presentation by showing Table 1.3 which depicts the main reasons why women with marginal attachment to the labour force do not actively look for work. Look more closely at the reasons why some women are discouraged jobseekers. For example, you could provide information on a locality which has been disadvantaged due to the decline of a particular industry, or occupations which are no longer required in our technologically advanced society. Talk about the difficulties with language that are experienced by some migrant women and how education and training is becoming increasingly important in the job market.







## SECTION 2: WOMEN AND EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS

The Federal Government's commitment to achieving gender equality is reflected in the enactment of the Sex Discrimination Act in 1984 and the Affirmative Action (Equal Opportunity for Women) Act in 1986. In September 1992 the Sex Discrimination Commissioner reported that the Federal Government intended to improve the status of women and improve the equality of the sexes in the workplace. The Commissioner's report also highlighted the need for a comprehensive approach to gender equality, including the promotion of women's participation in decision-making and the elimination of discrimination against women in the workplace.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is committed to providing accurate and timely information on the status of women in the workforce. This section of the report provides a comprehensive overview of the current situation for women in the Australian workforce, including the latest data on employment, pay, and working conditions. The section also discusses the challenges facing women in the workforce and the role of the government in addressing these challenges.

The ABS has conducted a series of surveys and studies to gather data on the status of women in the workforce. This data is used to inform policy and to monitor progress towards gender equality. The ABS is committed to continuing its work in this area and to providing the public with the most up-to-date and accurate information available.



## SECTION 2







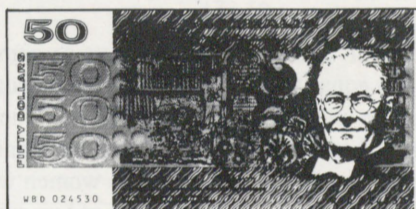
## SECTION 2: WOMEN AND EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS

The Federal Government's commitment to eliminating discrimination against women in the workplace is reflected by the passing of the *Sex Discrimination Act* in 1984 and the *Affirmative Action (Equal Opportunity) for Women Act* in 1986. In September 1992 the Prime Minister announced that the Federal Government intended to propose to Parliament amendments to extend the scope and improve the operation of these acts. It is therefore illegal for employers to discriminate against anyone in the workplace on the basis of their sex.

However, despite legal reform, a number of social commentators contend that not all women enjoy the same career opportunities and employment conditions as men. Compared to men, the number of women in senior management positions is small. Female average weekly earnings still lag behind those of men, and women are less likely to receive benefits such as sick leave, holiday leave and superannuation. Entitlement to paid maternity leave for all women and the provision of work-based child care also remain important issues.

Reduced employment conditions for women are often a consequence of the fact that they still accept prime responsibility for caring for the home and family. Thus, they are likely to accept a job which allows them to combine these responsibilities. This often involves them doing part-time or casual work with a limited or non-existent career path.

Section 2 examines female employment conditions in comparison with those of men. It looks at the progress made towards achieving equal pay for equal work; it also contains information on superannuation coverage and trade union membership.





### **Wages and Salaries**

*"The Court does not think it necessary or desirable, at any rate at the present time, to declare any wage as a basic wage for female employees. Generally speaking, they carry no family responsibilities. The minimum rate should, of course, never be too low for the reasonable needs of the employee, but those needs may vary in different industries."*

**The Commonwealth Arbitration Court, 1934**

In 1934 the Commonwealth Arbitration Court continued the practice of setting female wage rates below those of men with the above justification.

The prevailing practice until 1942 was for the base wage for women to be fixed, industry by industry, as a proportion of the male basic wage, depending on the nature and general circumstances of the industry to be covered. The proportion was generally 54 per cent, but in some cases it was up to 56 per cent. It was assumed that the responsibilities and needs of female workers were less than those of male workers.

The war years (1939-45) saw a rise in female wages in certain industries considered necessary to the war effort. The Women's Employment Board was set up to encourage women to undertake work normally performed by men; it was required to fix wages of women, on the basis of their efficiency and productivity in relation to men engaged in such work, provided that such wages were not less than 60 per cent nor more than 100 per cent of the male wage.

In 1949 the Arbitration Court was empowered to determine or alter a 'basic wage for adult females'. In the 1949-50 Basic Wage Enquiry a single female basic wage was determined for the first time. Its value was fixed at 75 per cent of the male basic wage.

The basis for the full realisation of equal pay for women and men was established by the Arbitration Commission, the Arbitration Court's successor, in three decisions over the period 1969 to 1975. In essence, the principles provided that equal pay would apply where the work performed by adult women and men was of the same or like nature and of equal value, and where the women and men concerned were working under the terms of the same award or determination. The move to equality was to be implemented in three stages, 85 per cent by December 1973, 90 per cent by September 1974 and 100 per cent by June 1975.

An examination of Table 2.1 may suggest to some that the desire of the Arbitration Commission for equal pay for equal work has not yet been realised. However, care should be taken in interpreting the information. The fact that women have lower average weekly earnings than men does not necessarily signify wage discrimination. Rather, it is a consequence of the fact that many more women work part-time compared to men, and that many women still remain in positions of less responsibility at work.



**TABLE 2.1: AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS OF FULL-TIME ADULT  
NON-MANAGERIAL EMPLOYEES (a), AUSTRALIA**

(dollars)

	1972	1978	1983	1987	1990	1991
Women	67.40	177.20	294.60	385.10	472.80	498.50
Men	97.80	216.70	358.00	465.00	574.80	595.60
Women's earnings (as % of men's)	68.9	81.8	82.3	82.8	82.3	83.7

(a) Estimates are for May of each year, except 1972 which is for October.

Sources: *Distribution and Composition of Employee Earnings and Hours, Australia*, ABS Cat. No. 6306.0 and *Survey of Weekly Earnings and Hours, Australia, October 1972*, ABS Cat. No. 6304.0

Table 2.1 shows that although female average weekly earnings made a significant gain relative to those of men soon after the introduction of the Arbitration Commission's decisions, they have remained at just over 80 per cent of male earnings since that time. In recent years Australian companies and public service departments have adopted Equal Employment Opportunity strategies to help redress the imbalance of women in lower paying jobs. If successful, these strategies may act to increase female average weekly earnings compared to those of men.

Some interesting comparisons can be made by examining recent data on the composition of average weekly earnings. You can pin-point the component where the disparity, in percentage terms, between female and male earnings is greatest. Table 2.2 shows that the greatest disparity occurs with overtime payments. At May 1991, on average, men earned just under five times as much overtime pay as women.

There are several reasons for the significant disparity in overtime pay. Male dominated industries such as manufacturing and mining tend to be where a lot of overtime is done. Women may be less willing than men to travel outside normal working hours, particularly on public transport. Women tend to exercise greater family responsibilities than their partners; they spend more time than their partners on preparing meals and caring for children and so have less time available to them to work overtime.

**TABLE 2.2: COMPOSITION OF AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS,  
AUSTRALIA, MAY 1991**

(dollars)

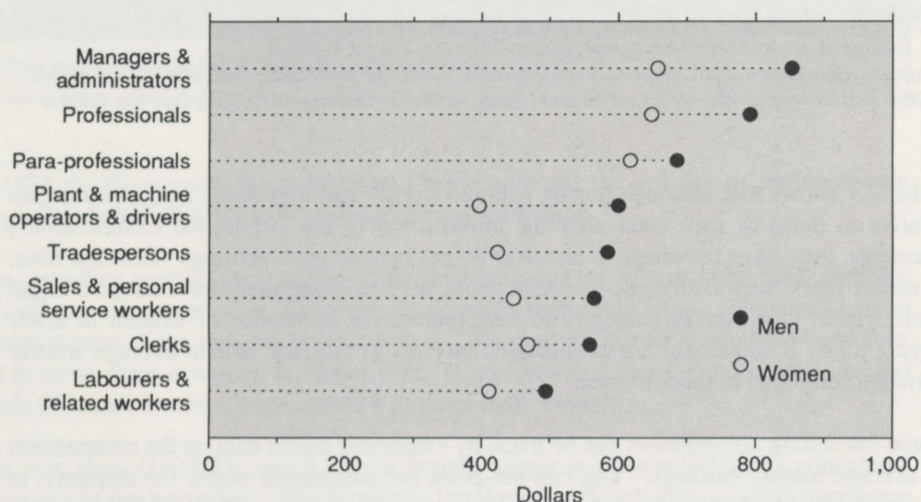
	Women	Men
Ordinary time		
Award or agreed base rate of pay	478.60	521.70
Payment by measured result	1.90	7.90
Overaward pay	6.70	10.90
Total ordinary time	487.20	540.50
Overtime	11.30	55.10
<b>Total</b>	<b>498.50</b>	<b>595.60</b>

Source: *Distribution and Composition of Employee Earnings and Hours, Australia, May 1991*, ABS Cat. No. 6306.0



As you might expect, female average weekly earnings vary from those of men by different amounts depending upon the occupation. Chart 2.1 shows that, at May 1991, women earned less on average than men in all major occupation groups. However, the disparity varied and it would be interesting to suggest reasons for this.

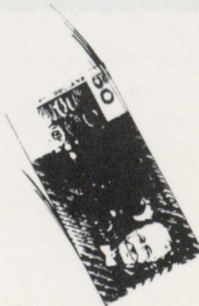
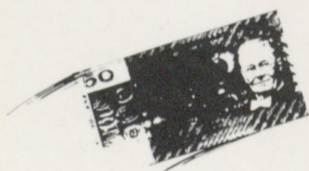
**CHART 2.1: AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS OF ALL EMPLOYEES, BY OCCUPATION, AUSTRALIA, MAY 1991**



Source: *Distribution and Composition of Employee Earnings and Hours, Australia, May 1991*, ABS Cat. No. 6306.0

The information in Chart 2.1 can be calculated to show that, at May 1991:

- ◆ women in the para-professional occupation group were paid the highest percentage of male average weekly earnings (90.1 per cent);
- ◆ the next highest percentage was paid to clerks (83.7 per cent), then labourers and related workers (83.1 per cent);
- ◆ the greatest disparity between female and male average weekly earnings was in the plant and machine operators and drivers group (female average weekly earnings were 66.1 per cent of those of men).





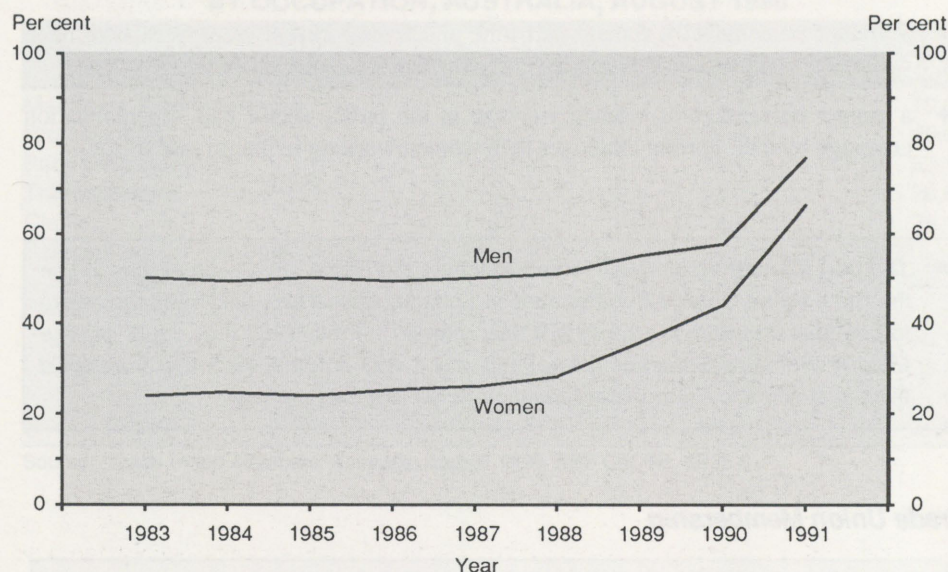
### Superannuation

Superannuation refers to money saved for the day when a person finally retires from work. The savings are then paid out to the person in the form of a lump sum, a regular pension or a combination of both.

Less than a decade ago superannuation was available as an employment benefit only to a select group of occupations and industries. However, as the average age of Australia's population increases, the number of age pension liabilities is expected to grow. Thus, in recent years, moves have been made by the Federal Government to encourage workers to provide for their own retirement.

An ABS survey in November 1991 found that just over 1 million Australian women aged between 15 and 74 had not joined a superannuation scheme. Their reasons for not joining varied, with 25.8 per cent stating they had not bothered or were not interested in such schemes, 25.1 per cent stating they could not afford to join a scheme, and 8.9 per cent stating that their spouse had superannuation coverage.

**CHART 2.2: EMPLOYEES WITH SUPERANNUATION IN MAIN JOB (a)**



(a) Estimates are for August of each year, except 1991 which is for July. Refers to employees who are covered by superannuation by their current employer.

Source: *Employment Benefits, Australia*, ABS Cat. No. 6334.0

Chart 2.2 shows the rapid increase in the percentage of female and male employees with superannuation coverage since 1988. Although more and more women have gained superannuation coverage in recent years they still lag behind men in percentage terms. This is despite the fact that the rate of increase for women has been higher than that for men since 1988. Chart 2.2 shows that, at July 1991:

- ◆ 66.4 per cent of female employees had superannuation coverage in their main job compared with 76.8 per cent for men.



**TABLE 2.3: EMPLOYEES WITH SUPERANNUATION IN MAIN JOB (a),  
AUSTRALIA, JULY 1991**  
(per cent)

	Women	Men
<b>Full-time/part-time</b>		
Full-time	78.5	80.6
Part-time	46.5	24.4
<b>Permanent/casual</b>		
Permanent	80.1	83.6
Casual	29.3	26.6
<b>Sector</b>		
Public	79.5	92.0
Private	60.9	71.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>66.4</b>	<b>76.8</b>

(a) Refers to employees who are covered by superannuation by their current employer.

Source: *Employment Benefits, Australia, July 1991*, ABS Cat. No. 6334.0

Table 2.3 shows that, at July 1991:

- ◆ a greater percentage of female part-time and female casual employees than male equivalents had superannuation coverage by their current employer;
- ◆ a greater percentage of women working in the public sector had superannuation coverage by their current employer than women working in the private sector.

☛ **Did you know that:** although female teachers in Victoria have been eligible to join the State Public Service Superannuation Scheme since 1925, until 1968 they were forced to resign from the scheme if they married? From 1968 they could join the Married Women's Superannuation Fund, but it was not until 1975 that they could elect to stay in the State Superannuation Scheme if they married.

### **Trade Union Membership**

Historically, trade unions grew from the Craft Guilds which existed to protect the interests of craftsmen from pressure from employers and other workers. Some contend that, in the past, the reason why trade unions supported equal pay for equal work was to prevent women from working for less pay, so taking jobs that would otherwise have been done by men. Nowadays, trade unions concentrate their energies on ensuring equitable pay scales for all their members. They also work in other areas such as occupational health and safety and the provision of training and financial services.

From Table 2.4 you can see that the percentage of employees belonging to trade unions has decreased for both women and men over time. Women have consistently had lower membership rates of trade unions. This could be partly because, historically, trade unions were more interested in recruiting men. Further, women predominate in the part-time or casual labour force; people in these sectors tend to be less likely to join a trade union.



**TABLE 2.4: EMPLOYEES WHO ARE TRADE UNION MEMBERS IN THEIR MAIN JOB**  
(per cent)

	1976 (a)	1982	1986	1988	1990
Women	43	43.2	39.1	35.0	34.6
Men	56	53.4	50.1	46.3	45.0

(a) Only available to nearest per cent.

Source: *Trade Union Members, Australia*, ABS Cat. No. 6325.0

It is worth noting that a higher percentage of women belong to trade unions in some occupations than in others. From Table 2.5 you can see that the greatest percentage of women belonging to a trade union in a major occupation group is in the para-professional group. This group includes people such as nurses, police and scientific technical officers. You may like to suggest reasons why certain groups of female workers are more unionised than others.

**TABLE 2.5: PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN BELONGING TO A TRADE UNION, BY OCCUPATION, AUSTRALIA, AUGUST 1990**

	<i>Permanent employee</i>	<i>Casual employee</i>	<i>Total</i>
Managers & administrators	21.4	5.1	19.0
Professionals	55.2	23.6	49.8
Para-professionals	56.2	33.1	53.1
Tradespersons	33.2	12.0	28.6
Clerks	29.9	8.0	26.1
Salespersons & personal service workers	38.2	21.6	30.2
Plant & machine operators & drivers	60.5	11.2	50.1
Labourers & related workers	55.5	18.6	39.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>41.1</b>	<b>18.0</b>	<b>34.6</b>

Source: *Trade Union Members, Australia, August 1990*, ABS Cat. No. 6325.0

☛ **Did you know that:** the first female trade union in Australia was the Victorian Tailoresses Union? It was formed in 1882 after the tailoresses in one factory walked out over a pay cut.





## SUGGESTED CLASS ACTIVITIES

### Australian Studies - Introductory Activities



1. Look at Table 2.1 and describe the differences in average weekly earnings for women and men since 1972. With your friends, write down a list of factors which might have contributed to women earning less on average than men. Then do some investigating by completing the short exercises below.

Is the amount of overtime paid a contributing factor to the differences between average weekly earnings of women and men? Use evidence from Table 2.2 to support your answer.

Refer to Table 1.9 in Section 1 and write down those major occupation groups which have a relatively high percentage of women in them. With this information in mind, look at Chart 2.1 and draw conclusions as to whether women are concentrated in higher or lower paying occupations compared to men.

2. You would be an uncommon teenager if you gave much thought to when you might retire or what you will be doing when you finish work! However, when you join the workforce you may start contributing to a superannuation fund. Find out exactly what superannuation is, and then refer to Chart 2.2. How has the percentage of female and male employees covered by superannuation schemes changed since 1983? List the reasons which might account for the lower percentage of women being covered by superannuation schemes.

Over the next two weeks monitor the advertisements for private superannuation in the media. Take note of the organisation selling the superannuation and whether the advertisement is directed at women, men or both sexes, and which particular income group they are targeting. Are any reasons given for why it is important to contribute to a superannuation fund?

Find out the age at which women and men are eligible to receive the age pension, whether a means test applies and the actual amount paid to pensioners. Given this information, do you think it is important to contribute to a superannuation scheme?

3. Make a list of as many trade unions as you can and write a brief paragraph outlining the purposes of trade unions. Suggest reasons why women have consistently had lower membership rates of trade unions compared to men, as shown in Table 2.4.

Refer to Table 1.9 in Section 1 and list the number of occupations which could be said to be predominantly 'female' occupations. What effect might lower female membership of trade unions have on the working conditions in these occupations?



**Australian Studies - Major Projects**

1. Undertake a case study on female employment conditions. Use the information in this section to describe female employment conditions compared to those of men. Write to the Equal Employment Opportunity Co-ordinator of a large company or government department requesting a copy of their Equal Employment Opportunity Policy and any other relevant information about seminars or training sessions that have taken place. Describe the ways in which the organisation has tried to redress some of the inequalities in working conditions for women.
2. There have been many female employment issues with which trade unions have dealt. Pick one of these issues and write a report tracing the history of how the trade union movement has fought to gain better working conditions for women. Examples of issues are:

maternity leave, parental leave, equal pay, affirmative action, anti-discrimination legislation and child care provision.

In your conclusion refer to Table 2.4 outlining what percentage of women belong to a trade union and why low female trade union membership rates may hinder further developments concerning female employment conditions.

**Economics - Applied Economic Exercises**

1. Why are women earning less on average than men? To answer this question cut out three job advertisements for any of the major occupation groups listed in Chart 2.1 from the employment section of a newspaper. Use the advertisements to compile a list of factors which might affect the wage level earned by some employees, such as educational attainment or the ability to work long hours. Discuss the factors in class and add to your list if necessary.

Refer again to Chart 2.1 which shows that, at May 1991, women earned less on average than men in all major occupation groups. As a class, suggest reasons why this might be the case taking each of the factors from your list above and examining whether women are disadvantaged in this area. For example, the level of education is a factor which might affect wage levels so you could look at data on educational attainment for both women and men. Where possible, use statistics within this booklet as well as your economic textbooks in order to support your assertions. After class discussion, write two paragraphs describing the reasons why women earn less on average than men.

2. Imagine earning \$67.40 as your weekly pay today (refer to Table 2.1). You may wonder how anyone could survive, but don't forget the cost of living was much lower than it is today. For example, in Melbourne in 1972 the average price of a litre of milk was 18 cents, 250 grams of butter was 31 cents and one dozen eggs was 64 cents. How much do these items cost today? Ask a friend or a member of your family, who was working full-time in 1972, if they remember how much their weekly earnings were and how much it cost for items such as bread, milk, meat or





common consumer goods such as the television or the family car. While there has been an increase in the money value of wages since 1972, to what extent do you think there has been an increase in **real** wages given that prices have risen?

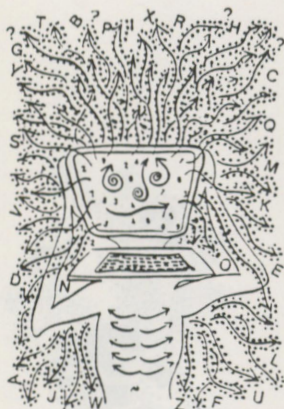
3. From Table 2.1 you can calculate the percentage change in average weekly earnings for women for the period 1972 to 1991. Just follow these easy steps:

$$\frac{431.1 \text{ (change in average earnings)}}{67.4 \text{ (previous amount)}} \times 100 = 639.6 \text{ per cent}$$

Calculate the percentage change in average weekly earnings for men for the period 1972 to 1991. To what extent do you think changes in legislation between 1969 and 1972 contributed to increases in average weekly earnings for women?

4. Most people, let alone school students, do not think about what they will be doing after they finally retire from work. Saving for retirement seems a long way off when you first begin work. Refer to Chart 2.2 and explain how the percentage of employees covered by superannuation has changed since 1984. Why do you think it is so important that Australians should save for the future?

### English - Communication Projects



1. Topic: Are women breaking out of traditional moulds?

Intention: to entertain and inform.

Audience: another VCE class.

Conduct a small role play which portrays the reversal of the current roles of women and men in the workplace and at home. In your play women will earn more on average than men, be concentrated in higher paying occupations, work more overtime than men, and have less responsibility for children and home duties.

After the play ask your audience to respond to why the act was funny or unusual and then show statistics in Section 2 on female employment conditions. Ask your audience to offer explanations as to why women might earn less than men, and follow up the discussion by looking at issues such as sexual discrimination, how the responsibility for looking after family and performing domestic duties is divided within the family, and educational attainment of both women and men.

2. Topic: The working woman today.

Intention: to entertain and inform.

Audience: another VCE class.

Present a profile of the working woman in the 1990s. Use the cartoon opposite to generate discussion about the difficulties some women may face as a result of combining paid employment with raising a family. Use statistics in Section 2 to add interest to your presentation. You could discuss how child responsibilities might affect the following:

career opportunities, occupation chosen, working hours, weekly earnings.











### SECTION 3: WORK PATTERNS OF WOMEN IN VICTORIA

Whether or not women enjoy employment has long been influenced by their individual role in the primary sector of the family. As women have developed what should have been leisure opportunities at the expense of their child-bearing years and as the home has become more and more a place of work, the balance has shifted.

The consequences of this shift have been a change in the pattern of work. Women have moved from the home to the workplace and from the workplace to the home. The pattern of work has changed from a simple, repetitive task to a complex, multi-faceted one.

A number of factors have contributed to this change. The first is the increasing need for women to work outside the home. The second is the increasing complexity of the work itself. The third is the increasing need for women to balance work and family life.

Section 3 of the report examines the work patterns of women in Victoria. It looks at the different types of work that women do, the hours they work, and the challenges they face. It also looks at the ways in which women have adapted to these challenges and the ways in which they have contributed to the economy.

Section 3 is divided into three parts. The first part looks at the different types of work that women do. The second part looks at the hours that women work. The third part looks at the challenges that women face and the ways in which they have adapted to these challenges.



### SECTION 3







### SECTION 3: WORK PATTERNS OF WOMEN IN VICTORIA

Whether or not women enjoy uninterrupted, full-time employment has long been influenced by their traditional role as the primary carer of the family. A pattern has developed which shows many women leaving employment at the time of their child-bearing years, and re-entering the labour force, at a later date, after the lessening of some family responsibilities.

The consequences of taking a break from employment can include broken career paths, job insecurity and the loss of a 'network' which may have developed over time. Leaving work can, therefore, result in the loss of support structures for women; many women also experience problems upon returning to work.

A number of employers have come to recognise these problems; public sector departments and some private employers have taken steps to accommodate the emerging needs of women and other people with special requirements. Creation of permanent part-time employment has benefited women, as has the provision of work-based and other child care facilities.

Australia has signed the International Labour Organisation (ILO) convention 156 which requires regular reporting to the ILO of the '*progressive implementation of . . . commitment to improve working conditions for workers with family responsibilities*'. However, it still appears that women more than men are affected by the conflict between a conventional pattern of work and the meeting of family responsibilities.

Section 3 examines Victorian women's work patterns from 1975 to 1991. It examines the reasons why Victorian women took breaks from employment, the difficulties they experienced upon returning to employment and why some chose to leave the labour force altogether.





### **Breaks from Employment**

The 1980s have seen employers become increasingly flexible in response to the needs of different categories of employees. For example, there is now a greater appreciation of the necessity for women to take breaks from employment, in particular, for family reasons. This has resulted in a degree of workplace reform. In both the public and private sectors, greater work flexibility has been introduced through such things as flexible working hours, maternity leave and special leave entitlements.

In October 1991 the ABS surveyed Victorian women about their work patterns. Some of the questions related to breaks from employment. A 'break' was defined as three months or more away from employment for reasons such as resignation, dismissal or the taking of leave.

**TABLE 3.1: WOMEN WHO TOOK A BREAK FROM EMPLOYMENT  
SINCE 1975, VICTORIA, OCTOBER 1991**

	Number ('000)	Per cent (a)
<b>Sector</b>		
Private	298.5	50.9
Public	116.0	57.8
<b>Full-time/part-time</b>		
Employed full-time	219.9	44.2
Employed part-time	194.5	67.2
<b>Permanent/casual (b)</b>		
Permanent	265.9	49.2
Casual	85.1	70.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>414.5</b>	<b>52.7</b>

(a) Percentage of women employed in that category, at October 1991, who had taken a break from employment since 1975. (b) Excludes self-employed.

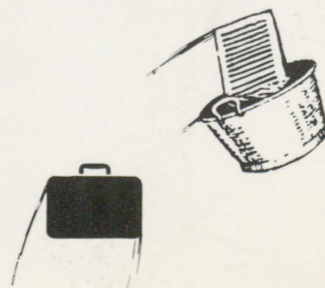
Source: *Work Patterns of Women, Victoria, October 1991*, ABS Cat. No. 6204.2

The information in Table 3.1 shows that, at October 1991:

- ♦ of those women employed in Victoria, 52.7 per cent had taken at least one break from employment since 1975.

It should be noted that Table 3.1 only refers to women who were employed at October 1991. The ABS also asked women who were either unemployed or not in the labour force at that time whether or not they had taken a break from employment since 1975. If these categories are included then, at October 1991:

- ♦ 66.5 per cent of women in Victoria had taken at least one break from employment since 1975.

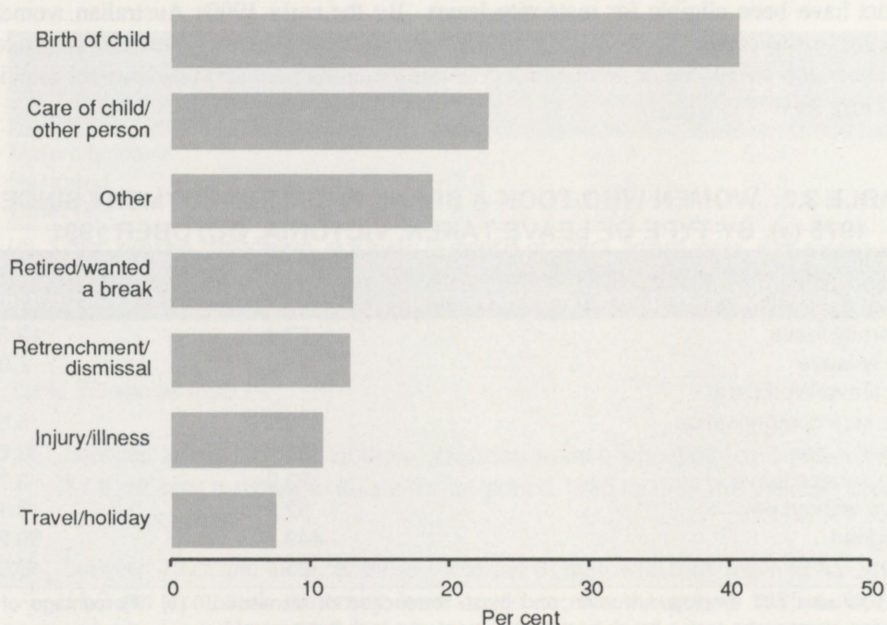




### Reasons for Breaks from Employment

Naturally enough, the reasons vary why women take breaks from employment. Chart 3.1 shows that issues associated with the family were major reasons why Victorian women took breaks from employment between 1975 and 1991.

**CHART 3.1: WOMEN WHO TOOK A BREAK FROM EMPLOYMENT SINCE 1975 (a), BY REASON, VICTORIA, OCTOBER 1991**



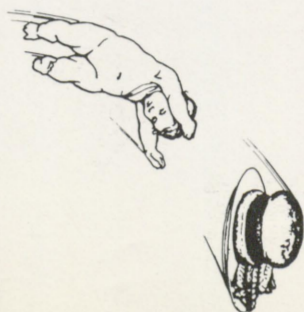
(a) Refers to most recent break taken.

Source: *Work Patterns of Women, Victoria, October 1991*, ABS Cat. No. 6204.2

Chart 3.1 shows that, between 1975 and 1991:

- ◆ 'birth of child' was the reason most often stated by Victorian women for taking a break from employment (40.5 per cent);
- ◆ other reasons reported were 'care of child or other person' (22.6 per cent), 'retired or wanted a break' (12.9 per cent), 'retrenchment or dismissal' (12.7 per cent), 'injury or illness' (10.8 per cent) and 'travel or holiday' (7.4 per cent).

(Note: the percentages add to more than 100 because women could give more than one reason for taking their most recent break).





### Type of Leave Taken

Before 1979 maternity leave was relatively uncommon. This is one of the reasons for high historical rates of resignation from work by women of child-bearing age. Long standing demands for women's rights in several areas, such as maternity leave and child care, prompted lobbying pressure from the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU).

In 1979 one of its major demands – maternity leave – was successfully represented to the Arbitration Commission. Since then, full-time workers in the public and private sectors have been eligible for maternity leave. By the early 1990s Australian women working in the private sector were entitled to twelve months unpaid maternity leave; women in the public sector were entitled to three months paid and nine months unpaid maternity leave.

**TABLE 3.2: WOMEN WHO TOOK A BREAK FROM EMPLOYMENT SINCE 1975 (a), BY TYPE OF LEAVE TAKEN, VICTORIA, OCTOBER 1991**

Type of leave taken during most recent break	Number ('000)	Per cent (b)
Maternity leave	83.1	12.8
Family leave	13.2	2.0
Sick leave/Workcare/Workers compensation	36.5	5.6
Annual leave	23.3	3.6
Long service leave	23.9	3.7
Leave without pay	52.8	8.1
Resigned	449.7	69.2
Other	25.4	3.9

(a) Excludes self employed women and those retrenched or dismissed. (b) Percentage of Victorian women who took a break from employment who took that type of leave.

Source: *Work Patterns of Women, Victoria, October 1991*, ABS Cat. No. 6204.2

Table 3.2 shows that, of those Victorian women who took a break from employment between 1975 and 1991:

- ◆ most resigned from their job at the time of their most recent break (69.2 per cent);
- ◆ 12.8 per cent took maternity leave at the time of their most recent break.

(Note: the percentages add to more than 100 because some women took more than one type of leave during their most recent break).





It is worth noting that in recent years the percentage of Victorian women resigning from employment to have a child has fallen significantly. This is borne out by Table 3.3 which also shows that since 1979 more and more women have taken maternity leave rather than resigning.

**TABLE 3.3: WOMEN WHO TOOK A BREAK FROM EMPLOYMENT SINCE 1975 FOR BIRTH OF CHILD, BY TYPE OF LEAVE TAKEN, VICTORIA, OCTOBER 1991**  
(per cent)

	Year break taken			
	1975 to 1979	1980 to 1984	1985 to 1989	1990 to 1991
Maternity leave	11.2	21.3	34.4	44.0
Resigned	87.8	70.9	55.3	39.0
Other (a)	8.5	16.8	22.9	23.8

(a) 'Other' includes family leave, sick leave (3 months or more), annual leave, long service leave, other paid leave and leave without pay.

Source: *Work Patterns of Women, Victoria, October 1991*, ABS Cat. No. 6204.2

Table 3.3 shows that:

- ◆ between 1975 and 1979, of those Victorian women who took leave to have a child, 87.8 per cent resigned to do so; for the period 1985 to 1989 this estimate decreased to 55.3 per cent;
- ◆ between 1975 and 1979, of those Victorian women who took leave to have a child, 11.2 per cent took maternity leave to do so; for the period 1985 to 1989 this estimate increased to 34.4 per cent.

(Note: the percentages add to more than 100 because some women took maternity leave and some other form of leave).

The survey also found that, for the period 1975 to 1991:

- ◆ 51.9 per cent of Victorian women in the public sector took maternity leave at the time of their most recent break, while 44.3 per cent resigned to have their child; for the private sector, 20.2 per cent took maternity leave, while 66.2 per cent resigned.

☛ **Did you know that:** in Australia, until October 1978, a maternity allowance was payable as a lump sum to women on the birth of a child to assist with the costs associated with childbirth? The allowance was abolished from November 1978 on the grounds that the need for it had been superseded by improved health care and family allowance provisions.



### Returning to Employment

For many women, returning to employment may involve a number of considerations. They must weigh up the priorities of caring for children or elderly parents against the financial need to work, career ambition and their own financial security in old age. They may also need to develop new skills, manage lifestyle changes, re-establish a support network, investigate re-training programs and become familiar with new technology.

In recent years, financial pressures and better leave provisions have accelerated the re-entry of women with children into the labour force. For many women, returning to employment or re-entering the labour force is coupled with the added, or continuing, responsibility for care of the family. Balancing the responsibilities of family and work can, therefore, become an important aspect of many women's everyday lives.

Thus, whether women choose to return to the same job or not is often influenced by the compatibility of the job with their family life. Children and other family demands may lead to women changing their job to one more suited to their new responsibilities. A change of job may involve changing to a different occupation, changing to a different employer or both.

**TABLE 3.4: WOMEN WHO RETURNED TO EMPLOYMENT SINCE 1975, VICTORIA, OCTOBER 1991**

After most recent break, returned to:	Total	
	Number ('000)	Per cent
Same job, same employer	137.6	31.4
Same job, different employer	73.7	16.8
Different job, same employer	11.1	2.5
Different job, different employer	215.7	49.2

Source: *Work Patterns of Women, Victoria, October 1991*, ABS Cat. No. 6204.2

Table 3.4 shows that, between 1975 and 1991:

- ◆ nearly half of all Victorian women who returned to employment returned to a different job and a different employer.

The survey also found that, since 1975:

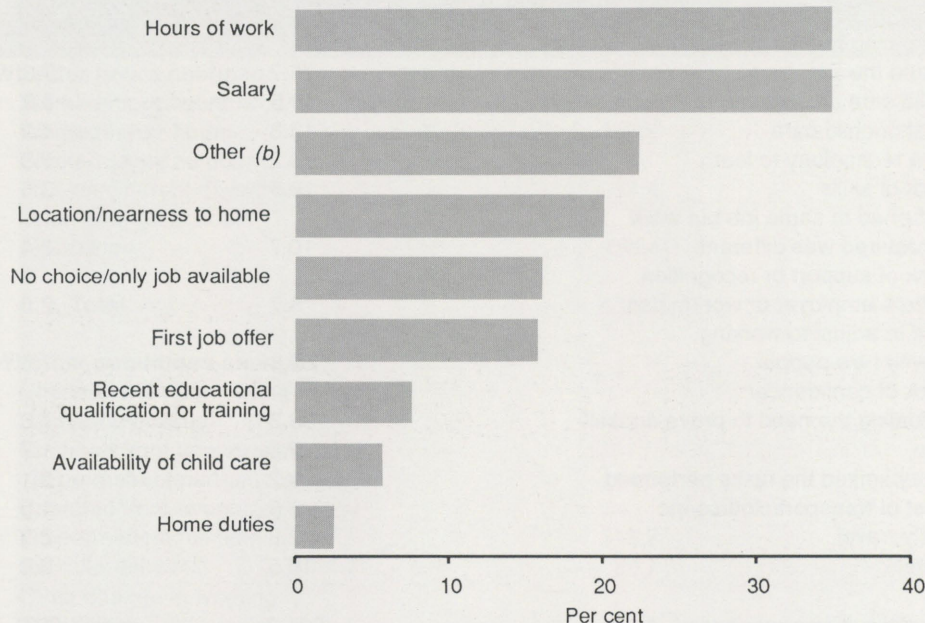
- ◆ the percentage of Victorian women returning to different jobs and different employers has been decreasing; for the period 1975 to 1979 the estimate was 63.0 per cent, and for 1985 to 1989 it was 43.6 per cent.





The population of Victorian women returning to a new job since 1975 can be divided into those who were responsible for children under 12 years of age and those who were not. If this is done, the estimates show that those with responsibility for children under 12 were nearly twice as likely to report '*hours of work*' as a factor affecting their decision to take a new job. The difference arises from the need of many women to structure their working day to allow them to care for their children.

**CHART 3.2: WOMEN WHO RETURNED TO A NEW JOB SINCE 1975 (a):  
FACTORS AFFECTING DECISION TO TAKE THAT JOB,  
VICTORIA, OCTOBER 1991**

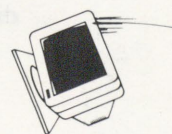


(a) After most recent break from employment. (b) Other includes availability of care for elderly, ill or handicapped persons or past work injury.

Source: *Work Patterns of Women, Victoria, October 1991*, ABS Cat. No. 6204.2

Chart 3.2 shows that, between 1975 and 1991:

- ♦ the major factors that affected the decision of Victorian women to return to a new job were '*hours of work*' and '*salary*'.





### Returning to Employment - Difficulties Experienced

The dual responsibility of job and family can be a major difficulty for women who return to paid employment after the birth of children. Family responsibilities remain when women are working; they can, for example, be kept away from work when their children are ill.

**TABLE 3.5: WOMEN WHO RETURNED TO EMPLOYMENT SINCE 1975 (a): DIFFICULTIES EXPERIENCED, VICTORIA, OCTOBER 1991**

	Total	
	Number ('000)	Per cent (b)
Balancing family responsibilities and the job	75.7	17.3
Child care arrangements	40.5	9.2
Cost of child care	18.3	4.2
New technology to learn	34.2	7.8
Lack of skills	15.5	3.5
Returned to same job but work required was different	10.7	2.4
Lack of support or recognition from employer or workmates	8.7	2.0
Had to adjust to working with new people	33.5	7.6
Lack of confidence/feeling the need to prove oneself	33.3	7.6
Age	7.6	1.7
Injury limited the tasks performed	9.2	2.1
Cost of transport/clothes etc	6.5	1.5
Daily travel	12.8	2.9
Other	16.5	3.8
<i>No difficulties experienced</i>	<i>301.3</i>	<i>68.8</i>

(a) After most recent break from employment. (b) Components add to more than 100 as some women reported more than one difficulty.

Source: *Work Patterns of Women, Victoria, October 1991*, ABS Cat. No. 6204.2

Table 3.5 shows that, between 1975 and 1991:

- ◆ just under one third of those Victorian women who returned to employment experienced some form of difficulty;
- ◆ the most commonly stated difficulties that Victorian women experienced upon returning to employment were 'balancing family responsibilities and the job' (17.3 per cent), followed by 'child care arrangements' (9.2 per cent).

The survey also found that:

- ◆ Victorian women responsible for children under 12 years of age reported more difficulties than those women not responsible for children under 12 years of age; 41.3 per cent and 23.9 per cent, respectively, reported experiencing some form of difficulty upon returning to employment.



### Changes in Conditions of Employment

The availability of part-time employment and flexible working arrangements have enabled many women to combine work and family responsibilities. Flexibility in working life originally referred to part-time employment. Nowadays, flexibility covers a much wider range of work conditions which differ from the standard working day or week.

**TABLE 3.6: WOMEN WHO RETURNED TO EMPLOYMENT SINCE 1975 (a):  
CHANGES IN CONDITIONS, VICTORIA, OCTOBER 1991**

	Total	
	Number ('000)	Per cent (b)
<b>Whether hours changed:</b>		
Worked more hours	60.2	13.7
Worked fewer hours	158.8	36.2
Worked same number of hours but on different days/times	34.4	7.9
Other change in hours	9.0	2.0
No change	175.4	40.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>438.1</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Whether conditions changed:</b>		
Changed from permanent to temporary/casual	58.9	13.4
Changed from temporary/casual to permanent part-time	14.0	3.2
Changed from temporary/casual to permanent full-time	13.2	3.0
Did different work	89.7	20.5
Other change in working conditions	30.8	7.0
No change	229.5	52.4
<b>Total (c)</b>	<b>438.1</b>	<b>100.0</b>

(a) After most recent break from employment. (b) Percentage of women who returned to employment since 1975 who experienced that change in conditions. (c) Includes 'Don't know'.

Source: *Work Patterns of Women, Victoria, October 1991*, ABS Cat. No. 6204.2

Table 3.6 shows that, between 1975 and 1991:

- ◆ just over half of Victorian women reported no change in their working conditions after returning to employment from their most recent break;
- ◆ 59.9 per cent of Victorian women reported experiencing some change in their working hours;
- ◆ 36.2 per cent of Victorian women reported working fewer hours.

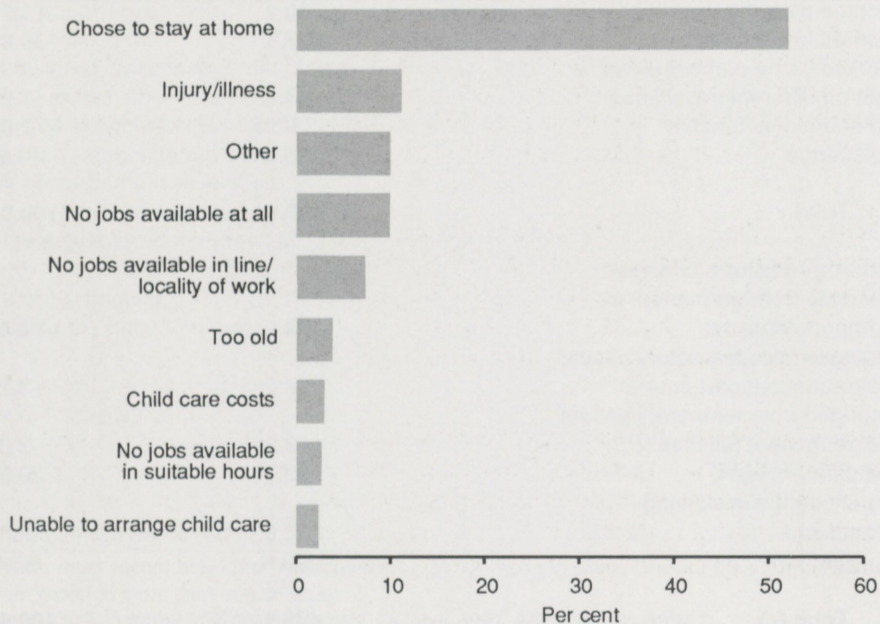


### Leaving the Labour Force

Not all women choose to return to the labour force after taking a break from employment. For various reasons, some choose to stay at home rather than look for work again.

Of the Victorian women who left the labour force in April 1991, 65.5 per cent intended to return and 15.9 per cent were undecided. 'Home duties/child care' was given as the main activity since leaving the labour force by 68.1 per cent of women, while 25.5 per cent reported 'attending an educational institution'.

**CHART 3.3: WOMEN WHO DID NOT RETURN TO EMPLOYMENT SINCE 1975 (a): REASON FOR NOT RETURNING, VICTORIA, OCTOBER 1991**



(a) After most recent break from employment.

Source: *Work Patterns of Women, Victoria, October 1991*, ABS Cat. No. 6204.2

Chart 3.3 shows that, between 1975 and 1991:

- ♦ 'choosing to stay at home' was the reason most often stated for not returning to employment (51.8 per cent).

☛ **Did you know that:** marriage was common as the reason for leaving work amongst Australian women until as recently as 1966, when the marriage bar for a permanent appointment to the Australian Public Service was removed?



## SUGGESTED CLASS ACTIVITIES

### Australian Studies - Introductory Activities

1. Investigate the work patterns of Victorian women. Look at Table 3.1. Choose the correct response from the two possible conclusions below and then suggest reasons to explain them.
  - ◆ Women employed on a part-time basis are more/less likely to take breaks from employment compared to women employed on a full-time basis.
  - ◆ Women employed on a permanent basis are more/less likely to take breaks from employment compared to women employed casually.



According to Table 3.2 what percentage of Victorian women resigned from employment? Find out the year in which maternity leave was granted to all female employees in Australia, and under what conditions. Do you think the statistics on women taking maternity leave from 1975 to 1979 (Table 3.3) would have been different if this form of leave had been introduced earlier?

2. Refer to Chart 3.1. What percentage of Victorian women took a break from employment to care for a child or other person? Write down the types of tasks required in looking after a child at various age levels and give an indication of the time which might be required to perform these tasks. Do you think Australian society recognises the value of work performed in looking after children?
3. Ask a female friend or family member what difficulties they may have faced as a result of returning to work after taking a break from employment. Write a paragraph describing these difficulties and then compare your findings with the data in Table 3.5. To what extent do you think taking breaks from employment might affect a woman's ability to progress in her career?

### Australian Studies - Major Projects

1. Undertake an investigation into the difficulties women may experience when returning to employment. Use Table 3.5 to assist you, as well as anecdotal evidence you can find in newspaper articles or books. What measures can be taken by the Government and private sector employers to relieve some of the difficulties women face upon returning to employment?
2. There is a trend towards more part-time employment which represents a significant change in the way people work. Write a report on female part-time employment. Find out the percentage of women who work part-time and then investigate different work arrangements such as job-sharing, part-day, part-week, part-month, and part-year employment.

You could talk to women involved in a variety of part-time work. Include possible reasons why women working part-time are more likely to take breaks from employment than those working full-time, as well as changes in conditions



experienced by those women who returned to employment since 1975 (Table 3.6). The factors which affected women's decisions to return to a new job (Chart 3.2) could also be included in your report.

### **Economics - Applied Economic Exercise**

1. Use the statistics from this booklet to analyse whether Australian women are hindered from reaching their full potential in the workplace. Take into consideration:

the range of occupations in which women are concentrated, average weekly earnings, labour force participation rates, unemployment rates, difficulties that women encounter upon returning to paid employment, reasons why women may take particular jobs when returning to employment.

Relate your findings to the effects on productivity and growth in the economy. What possible reforms would you like to see introduced with regard to women and employment issues if you were elected to Parliament?

### **English - Communication Projects**

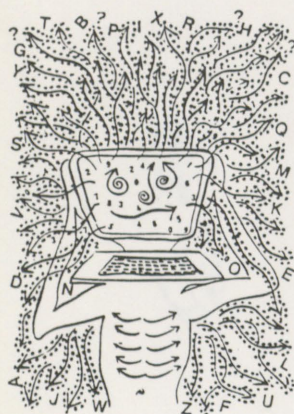
1. Topic: A woman's work is never done!  
Intention: to entertain, inform and elicit responses.  
Audience: another group of VCE students.

Present Tandberg's cartoon on the next page in order to generate discussion on the differing roles played by women and men in the home and whether these stereotyped images still exist today.

Within the classroom, ask students to think about how responsibilities for household tasks are distributed in their home by giving them the following list:

child care, decisions on major purchases, household shopping, preparing meals, money matters, small repairs, garbage disposal.

Discuss whether you think the responsibility taken for household tasks is evenly divided between the members of a family. You could also discuss the difficulties that are faced by some women who have to cope with paid employment and family responsibilities. Do the statistics in Table 3.5 suggest that a lot of women experience difficulties in balancing family responsibilities and work?





2. Topic: Changing attitudes towards work.  
 Intention: to inform and elicit responses.  
 Audience: another VCE class.

Start your presentation by showing Chart 3.3 which outlines the reasons why Victorian women did not return to employment. Ask students to examine whether attitudes towards staying at home or engaging in paid employment have changed since their grandparents' day and, if so, why. Examine Chart 3.3 again and discuss whether the reasons for not returning to employment would be the same had a survey been taken on men's work patterns. Account for the similarities or differences perceived.





## APPENDIX: UNPAID WORK

Whether you are conducting a board meeting, washing dishes or mowing the lawn, you are engaging in human activity called work. Such work can be either paid or unpaid. Traditionally, more importance has been placed on paid work than on unpaid work, but the value ascribed to unpaid work is now an emerging issue in Australian society.

Unpaid work predominantly refers to productive activity which takes place within the home, and which does not enter the formal market economy where reward for work occurs in the form of money income. Some typical examples of unpaid work in the home are child care, cleaning, cooking, doing repairs and gardening.

The increasing number of women who enter the labour force have less time available for domestic work. This raises the question of who is performing the unpaid work at home. A recent visit to a private boys' school in Sydney by Bettina Arndt brought forth the following comments in regard to unpaid work in the home:

*"Most of their mothers were in the workforce. That much was clear. But when I asked who was dealing with the second shift - the housework and child care that awaited Mum and Dad when they returned from work - the answers came more slowly.*

*'Mum does it all,' was the general response.*

*'How does she feel about that?' I asked.*

*'Oh, she loves it,' said the boys cheerfully. 'She loves cooking.'*

*It was left to one young man to put a slight dampener on this image of domestic bliss.*

*'Well,' he said slowly, 'occasionally Mum will explode and scream at us all for not helping her. But she gets over it.'*

*The knowing chuckle that greeted his words left the distinct impression that he wasn't the only one with an exploding mother."*

Bettina Arndt, *'The House Divided, Why Boys Will Be Boys'*, reproduced from *The Weekend Australian*, June 27-28 1992

In 1987 the ABS conducted a pilot study for a *Time Use Survey*, where people living in 1,000 dwellings in Sydney were asked to complete a 48 hour diary, listing the activities they were engaged in for each day. Some of the results of the survey are shown in Table A.1.

It should be stressed that the estimates in the table come from a pilot study that was experimental, and should not be regarded as authoritative. The pilot study took place in one city during one fortnight, and therefore did not take into account any seasonal or geographic factors (for example, more housework might take place during springtime).





**TABLE A.1: AVERAGE TIME SPENT ON UNPAID HOUSEHOLD WORK,  
SYDNEY STATISTICAL DIVISION, MAY/JUNE 1987**

	<i>Employment status</i>	<i>Marital status</i>	<i>Hours per fortnight</i>
Women	Employed	Married	69.3
		Not married	29.1
	Not employed	Married	95.5
		Not married	55.9
Men	Employed	Married	31.2
		Not married	19.0
	Not employed	Married	51.7
		Not married	29.8
Average for all persons			48.8

Source: *Measuring Unpaid Household Work: Issues and Experimental Estimates*, ABS Cat. No. 5236.0

Within the limitations of the survey, the following were major findings:

- ♦ on average, women spent more time than men on unpaid household work across all categories of marital and employment status;
- ♦ men who spent the most time on unpaid household work were those who were married but not employed.

A greater awareness of the stresses involved in combining paid employment with unpaid work has resulted in a number of initiatives. The Office of the Status of Women in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet is working on a community education program to assist women and men to juggle work and family responsibilities more effectively.

A two year inquiry into equal opportunity and equal status for women by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs has resulted in the report *Half Way to Equal*. The report calls on governments, employers and community groups to ensure that appropriate programs and policies are implemented to highlight the important contribution of unpaid and voluntary work to Australian society.

One of the recommendations of the report is that the Department of Social Security undertake an analysis of those claiming the Dependant Spouse Rebate with a view to replacing the rebate with a direct payment to the homemaker. More flexible workplace practices for workers with family responsibilities are also called for such as special leave to care for sick children or elderly relatives, and improved access to child care.

It is clear that striking a balance between work and family responsibilities will remain a challenging issue in the 1990s, and may involve not only community education but also workplace, industrial and legislative reform.

**NOTE:** For a more detailed examination of unpaid work refer to '*Measuring Unpaid Household Work: Issues and Experimental Estimates*', ABS Cat. No. 5236.0 or '*Juggling Time, How Australian Families Use Time*,' Office of the Status of Women, 1991.





### SUGGESTED CLASS ACTIVITY

Do a case study of unpaid work in your own household! Ask members of your household to keep a diary over a two day period recording their activities for each hour of the day. Within each hour they should note the time spent on each activity. The following example will give you an idea of how to approach this task.

#### EXAMPLE: 4pm — 8pm

A. What did you do?	B. Where were you?	C. Was the activity paid?	
		Yes	No
4.00 <i>Worked</i>	<i>Work</i>		
<i>Walked from work to bus stop</i>	<i>Walking</i>		
<i>Waiting for bus</i>	<i>Bus stop</i>		
<i>On bus travelling home</i>	<i>On bus</i>		
5.00 <i>Walked home from bus stop</i>	<i>Walking</i>		
<i>Drove to day care centre</i>	<i>Car (as driver)</i>		
<i>to collect son</i>			
<i>Collected son - Spoke to day care</i>	<i>Day care</i>		
<i>supervisor about son's behaviour</i>	<i>centre</i>		
<i>Drove home</i>	<i>Car (as driver)</i>		
6.00 <i>Watched news on TV</i>	<i>Home</i>		
<i>Prepared dinner whilst</i>	<i>"</i>		
<i>keeping an eye on the kids</i>			
7.00 <i>Served dinner</i>	<i>"</i>		
<i>Ate dinner while watching TV</i>	<i>"</i>		
<i>Walked next door to visit elderly neighbour</i>	<i>Walking</i>		
<i>Changed washer on leaking tap</i>	<i>At neighbour's</i>		
<i>for neighbour (he has arthritis</i>			
<i>and needs help)</i>			
8.00 <i>Had a cup of tea and talked</i>	<i>"</i>		





After the two day period, use the diary entries to fill in the **time chart** below for each member of your household. You may have to make some arbitrary decisions about what constitutes unpaid work when filling in the chart. For example, a person may spend time ironing while watching the T.V. so you will have to make a decision as to whether the primary activity undertaken is the ironing.

Activities	Time
<b>Domestic Activities:</b> <i>Housework -</i> Food and drink preparation and cleaning up Laundry, ironing and clothes care Other housework	
<i>Other domestic activities -</i> Gardening, lawn care and pool care Pet/animal care Home maintenance, improvement and car care Household paperwork, bills, etc. Providing transport for other household members Associated travel	
<b>Child care/minding:</b> <i>Own children -</i> Physical care and minding Care of sick or disabled Teaching, helping, reprimanding Playing, reading to, talking to	
<i>Other children -</i> Physical care and minding Care of sick or disabled Teaching, helping, reprimanding Playing, reading to, talking to Associated travel	
<b>Purchasing goods and services:</b> Goods Services Associated travel	
<b>Volunteer and community work:</b> Helping/caring for sick, frail or disabled relatives Helping/caring for sick, frail or disabled other persons Community activities Helping/doing favours for others Associated travel	
<b>TOTAL HOURS WORKED</b>	





*Discouraged jobseekers:* Persons with marginal attachment to the labour force who wanted to work and were available to start work within four weeks but whose main reason for not taking active steps to find work was that they believed they would not be able to find a job for any of the following reasons: considered to be too young or too old by employers; difficulties with language or ethnic background; lacked the necessary schooling, training, skills or experience; no jobs in their locality or line of work; or no jobs at all.

*Employment status:* The terms *working* and *not working* are used rather than the more rigidly defined terms *employed* and *not employed* used in the monthly labour force survey. These data are therefore not strictly comparable to those in the monthly labour force survey.

*Full-time employees:* Permanent, temporary and casual employees who normally work the agreed or award hours for a full-time employee in their occupation and received pay for any part of the reference period. If agreed or award hours do not apply, employees are regarded as full-time if they usually work 35 hours or more per week.

*Full-time workers:* Employed persons who usually work 35 hours or more a week (in all jobs) and others who, although usually working less than 35 hours a week, worked 35 hours or more during the reference week.

*Job:* A job is defined as either:

- (a) employment as a wage or salary earner (or unpaid family helper) by a particular employer in a particular locality; or
- (b) self-employment (with or without employees) in a particular locality.

*Labour force:* All persons who, during the reference week, were employed or unemployed, as defined. The labour force survey is based on a multi-stage area sample of private dwellings (about 31,000 houses, flats, etc.) and non-private dwellings (hotels, motels, etc.) and covers about three-fifths of one per cent of the population of Australia. The information is obtained from the occupants of selected dwellings by carefully chosen and specially trained interviewers. The interviews are generally conducted during the two weeks beginning on the Monday between the 6th and 12th of each month. The information obtained relates to the week before the interview (i.e. the reference week).

The labour force survey includes all people aged 15 years and over except:

- (a) members of the permanent defence forces;
- (b) certain diplomatic personnel of overseas governments, customarily excluded from census and estimated populations;
- (c) overseas residents in Australia; and
- (d) members of non-Australian defence forces (and their dependents) stationed in Australia.

The labour force category to which a person is assigned depends on the *actual activity* undertaken during the reference week (i.e. whether working, looking for work, etc.).

*Labour force participation rate:* The labour force in any group expressed as a percentage of the civilian population aged 15 and over in the same group. Because it is not practicable to ascertain the birthplace of persons in institutions (who are classified as not in the labour force), labour force participation rates for persons classified by birthplace are calculated by using population estimates which exclude those in institutions.

*Labour force status:* A classification of the civilian population aged 15 and over into employed, unemployed or not in the labour force, as defined. The definitions conform closely to the international standard definitions adopted by the International Conferences of Labour Statisticians.

*Marital status:* This characteristic is determined from information supplied by the respondent about the individual himself or herself and, where the person was reported as being married, about the living arrangements of persons usually resident in the household. Marital status does not therefore necessarily reflect legal status. Persons are classified as *married* (husband and wife) if they are reported as being married (including de facto) and their spouse was a usual resident of the household at the time of the survey. The *not-married* category includes persons who have never married, or are separated, widowed or divorced, as well as those who, although reported as being married, did not have a spouse who usually lived in the household. Persons who live in a de facto relationship but do not volunteer this information when asked whether they are married are classified as not married.

*Occupation:* Occupation is classified according to the *Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO) - 1st Edition, Statistical Classification (1222.0)*.



*Participation rate:* For any group, the labour force expressed as a percentage of the civilian population aged 15 and over in the same group. Participation rates for persons classified by birthplace are calculated using population estimates which exclude those in institutions. Participation rates for persons classified by school or tertiary educational institution attendance are calculated using population estimates which include those in institutions.

*Persons not in the labour force:* Persons who, during the reference week, were not in the categories employed or unemployed. They include persons who were keeping house (unpaid), retired, voluntarily inactive, permanently unable to work, persons in institutions (hospitals, gaols, sanatoriums, etc.), trainee teachers, members of contemplative religious orders, and persons whose only activity during the reference week was jury service or unpaid voluntary work for a charitable organisation. Specific surveys of persons not in the labour force indicate that a number want to work but are not classified as unemployed because they were not actively looking for work and/or were not available to begin work in the reference week. Included in this group are the discouraged jobseekers and other persons marginally attached to the labour force.

*Underemployed full-time workers:* Full-time workers who did not work full-time hours (i.e. did not work 35 hours or more) in the reference week for economic reasons, e.g. stood down, short time and insufficient work.

*Underemployed part-time workers:* Part-time workers who indicate that they would prefer to work more hours. Additional information was collected about those

underemployed part-time workers who had been looking for work with more hours at some time in the four weeks up to the end of the reference week and who were available to start such work within four weeks.

*Underemployment rate:* The number of underemployed expressed as a percentage of the labour force (i.e. employed plus unemployed) in the same group.

*Unemployed persons:* Persons aged 15 and over who were not employed during the reference week, and:

(a) had actively looked for full-time or part-time work at any time in the four weeks up to the reference week and:

- were available for work in the reference week, or would have been available except for temporary illness (i.e. lasting for less than four weeks to the end of the reference week); or

- were waiting to start a new job within four weeks from the end of the reference week and would have started in the reference week if the job had been available then; or

(b) were waiting to be called back to a full-time or part-time job from which they had been stood down without pay for less than four weeks up to the end of the reference week (including the whole of the reference week) for reasons other than bad weather or plant breakdown.

*Unemployment rate:* The unemployment rate for any group is the number unemployed expressed as a percentage of the labour force (i.e. employed plus unemployed) in the same group.



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